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MUSSOLINI'S ITALY

BY THE SAME AUTHOR:

THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF MODERN GOVERNMENT

ENGLISH LOCAL GOVERNMENT

MUSSOLINI'S ITALY

by

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the University of London

"We must speak as the peasants speak: simply, harshly, candidly, and in good faith."

MUSSOLINI

"Philosophers count about two hundred and eighty-eight views of the sovereign good."

PASCAL

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TO MY FATHER AND MOTHER

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PREFACE

My interest in Italian Fascism is principally as a system of government, a means of dominating, controlling, and guiding human beings, and less as a piece of machinery for supplying economic and social services. I lived in Italy from January to September 1933, and returned again in March and April 1934. While in Italy, I was able to discuss matters with Ministers, Civil Servants, local officials, Party officials, professors, plain men and women, and Signor Mussolini gave me the privilege of an interview. In the interval I have kept in continuous and immediate touch with Italian people and affairs. I have to thank them—*x*, *y*, and *z*, and all the rest—for the enlightenment they gave me, whether in so many words or in graceful reticence.

My thanks are due to Mr. Terence O'Brien, of Oxford and Harvard, who patiently read through my manuscript and offered me many valuable suggestions.

Some of my documentary sources are stated in the footnotes, but since I wanted to limit these to the minimum, not all of the sources are included. The statistics are mainly drawn from the official *Annuario Statistico* or from official communications to the newspapers. The quotations from Mussolini's speeches and writings are made from the eight volumes of *Scritti e Discorsi*, covering the time from October 1914 to the end of 1933 (which in the text I simply refer to by giving the dates), or from Chiurco, *Storia della Revoluzione Fascista*.

LONDON,
March, 1935.

Part I

Introduction

THIS is intended to be a work of impartial recognition and explanation. But since there must be a principle of selection, I have seized upon the problems which are generally recognised as vital to the successful functioning of modern States. Comparisons are drawn between the social and economic conditions of Italy and other countries, to discover whether and how far the causes and consequences of Fascism in Italy are universal or limited to that country. The ultimate question in the author's mind is, "Would the reader like to live in the Fascist State, not in the seats of authority, with the power to command others, but as a simple subject under the domination of an omnipotent, irresistible force which he would not be allowed to choose, criticise, or, least of all, reject, should experience prove it to be spiritually or economically unsatisfactory?" Italian events of the last decade reinforce the truth that immediate political benefits may be inimical to permanent political welfare, and that the latter depends on the ability to recognise and resist the temptation to grasp the specious and outwardly attractive solution of the moment.

What follows is an attempt to frame answers to a series of questions which continually pressed themselves on my attention. Along what road did the Dictator march to power? Who were his friends, and who his adversaries? What does he believe about the character of man, and the nature of his destiny? What is the force of his own character? How far are his beliefs substantially, rather than apparently, shared by his entourage? What limitations and opposition obstruct the will of the Dictator? Through what machinery does the Dictator's policy operate? What is the economic and spiritual effect of the system upon the Italian people? What has been its influence upon other countries?

Before we enter upon an examination of these problems it is not improper to make this observation. It is possible to appreciate the technique of government and the character of Mussolini

without admiring the ends to which they are turned. For such things enter into the amoral realms of art. We may admire the work of De Maupassant without making Tolstoy's famous judgement on him, that he was not an artist because his work "unfortunately lacked the chief of three conditions, besides talent, essential to a true work of art, a correct, that is, a *moral* relation to the subjects depicted." So may we recognise the qualities of Mussolini, though we may deplore the purposes he pursues, and even the doctrines he utters. Applause for the result is not the logical consequence of appreciation of ability : and we are surely not condemned to that impoverished type of destructive judgement that demands that we shall deny the excellence of the qualities because we do not happen to think that the world is well served by them. Let us recognise that here are superlative faculties, and that the world would be poorer for their non-existence or the loss of our capacity to appreciate them. But we are equally entitled to take Strindberg's point of view, when he answered Gauguin's request for a preface to the catalogue of his exhibition : "Monsieur, you have created a new heaven and a new earth, but I do not enjoy myself in the midst of your creation." As an aid to proper understanding, then, let these two attitudes be kept separate : appreciation of the Man's talents, and judgement of the purposes and results of his policy. The principle of Art for Art's sake is perhaps least justifiable in the art of governing mankind.

Chapter I

A BRIEF SURVEY OF THE DICTATORSHIP

Let us pass over phrases like the Corporative State, the Totalitarian State and the Ethical State (which may mean very little in practice), and let us discount the firework displays, the sky-writing, eloquent justifications, and the floods of promise, vaunting and defiance, and come direct to the plain fact: since October 29th, 1922, Italy has been living under a Dictatorship. For twelve years, Italy has enjoyed a government established by force, and ultimately maintained by force, by the exclusion of all alternative opinions as to policies and means. It is possible that the system is, or may become, popular in its purpose. Most Fascists argue that they have the interests of the people at heart, and that, since this is so, and since the power at their disposal permits them to achieve what they intend without the obstacles encountered in a representative Government, they are more truly democratic than any other. Whether the term is correctly used, and whether the Fascist system actually furthers the interests of the people, we shall discuss later on. But this is certain, that the system is not popular in origin, in the sense that it was established by the efforts of a free majority. Nor is it popular in its normal mechanism. For a five-yearly plebiscite cannot be called popular when it is conducted, as it is, without the free competition of rival policies and parties, and without even the freedom of choice implied by complete liberty to abstain from voting.

To clear our minds of cant, the word democracy may be left out of the question altogether. The Italian régime is a Dictatorship. Fascism is Mussolini: that is the judgement of most Italians.[1] It has all his strength, and weakness; and the most perturbing aspect of his strength is that, while he is great, the

[1] Cf. the English pamphlet published by the Fascist Propaganda Office, called *Mussolini: A View of Life*, obtainable for "Penny 1."

Italians must continue to be small; and the most fearful element of his weakness is that, as he is mortal, Fascism must perish with him, leaving as a heritage to the nation the problem of establishing a system of government suitable for average men. This can hardly be accomplished peacefully.

At the apex, "at the pin-point," as he himself has said, is Mussolini, the head of a hierarchy ramifying downwards and outwards through the whole country. He is the Prime Minister; he is the President of the Grand Council of Fascism (the real "Cabinet" of Italy); he is the Leader or "Duce" to whose person and orders the members of the Fascist Party (and Militia) and ancillary organisations swear allegiance. His will and legal authority pervade the whole corps of the bureaucracy and the highly centralised system of local government. There is an elected Parliament, but its candidates are in a very real sense nominees, selected by the Grand Council over which Mussolini presides; and nothing can appear on its Order Paper without the permission of the Prime Minister. The Council of Corporations is presided over by Mussolini, as Chief of the Government; the Corporations singly are presided over by his direct nominees; and the trade unions and employers' associations are managed by members of the Fascist Party congenial to the Minister of Corporations—Mussolini.

No one, of course, will imagine that there exists, or ever has existed, a man who could run a complete system of government unaided. Autocracy in the etymological sense is impossible in the modern State, and was probably never possible at any stage of social life.

Consequently, subordinates attend to the execution of the main lines of policy laid down by the Chief, and this implies that other opinions, besides Mussolini's, necessarily prevail. This is an inevitable rule of government, no matter what its forms. Now the important thing in Italy is, that while there is some elasticity of principle and action in the sphere which appertains to all people below Mussolini, a licensed questioning and deviation, nobody dares to discuss his decisions. These decisions are final; and only the intractability of things, and the inarticulate resistance of human nature, amend or nullify them. But Mussolini's intuitions are the supreme court of appeal in all the major

issues of policy, and even in many of subordinate character. It is true that many of these decisions are only the sifted result of long discussion in the Grand Council, or occasionally in Parliament, or the collated opinions of professors or big industrialists, but his interpretation of the advice he receives, his will to command, is Italy's settled political fate.

His policy is informed by, and works through, the Hierarchy of Grand Council, Council of Ministers, Fascist Party, Parliament, the Corporations, the Universities, Schools, and the Local Authorities. Those who hold the key positions in these institutions form an oligarchy which perpetuates itself by independent selection. Below and outside this Hierarchy, in conformity with the Fascist doctrine, are the People, the Masses, whose only political function is, in fact, "to Believe, to Obey, to Fight." That is the motto promulgated by the Duce, and written up everywhere as a sign. To create is not for the People, but for the Hierarchy. There are theories abroad in the Fascist State that the People will be allowed to participate in the direction of government as soon as they have learnt the nature of political "responsibility"—but these are only theories.

Mussolini towers above all who surround him; he is the commanding peak above all the institutions he has created or adapted. It is recognised by all (except a handful of those who want to deceive themselves into believing in an "impersonal Fascism"), that without the rather miraculous personal allegiance to him, the system would break into the ill-assorted pieces out of which it was originally constructed. All informed people in Italy fear the coming of the crash when Mussolini goes; all expect this crash; and the most conscientious, including Mussolini himself, desperately search after every possibility of averting it. He is the head and centre of all things in Italy to-day; for men will obey him without question (I will not say to the death). They will not obey his lieutenants with the same devotion; indeed, his assistants will not obey each other, or co-operate with each other, with the same ready deference they pay to him. As his brother Arnaldo wrote to him: "*I fascisti tutti hanno questo merito: non discutono il Capo*": "all the Fascists have this merit: they do not question the Chief." And again, "*Solo tu sei capace di far camminare in un movimento sincronico la*

Nazione e il Partito "[1]: "Only you are able to make the Nation and the Party move in step with each other." And my knowledge of the Fascist hierarchy, not less than of the ranks of the workers, the middle-class (the subject of Fascist contempt), and the richer classes (the subject of some Fascist hatred), supports this fraternal assurance. The sources of Mussolini's primacy and indispensability receive full treatment later in this book.

Fascist Doctrine. The silent often deserve obedience, but only the talkers secure it. Mussolini speaks directly, and often, to the people. If he did not, his government could not function, since none can function without the expression of a faith. After the word "Obedience," no word is commoner in Fascist Italy than the word "Faith." But Faith in what? Is there a Fascist doctrine? It is difficult to answer, because in this, as in almost every other aspect of their government, the Fascists, and Mussolini above all, have been gaily inconsistent, with the result that no one can be sure that the latest of Mussolini's statements is really sincere, and applicable even for a few years. The wind bloweth where it listeth. For Fascism began as a gesture of negation; its antipathies were, as Mussolini insisted, its distinctive mark. Recently, it is true, he has re-examined his own sayings and letters and produced some evidence that he *always* wanted a positive doctrine. But, as later chapters show, the weight of evidence is against this claim.

However, Mussolini had that within him which was bound to issue in a doctrinal pronouncement. He confesses an admiration for such great models as Moses and Cyrus and Solon. He recognises that if only a moral fulcrum could be found, he could lift the world as he wishes. Mussolini may lack many things, but it would be unfair to say he lacks self-confidence. He desires that his system should be immortal (in spite of his belief that systems of government must be adjusted to time and place), and universal (in spite of his declaration that Fascism is not an article of export).[2] Indeed, a doctrine is the very thing to replace the mortal man who is the vulnerable Atlas of his system. Perhaps a doctrine will cure the ever-renewing conflicts of class and mind.

[1] Mussolini, *Vita di Sandro e Arnaldo*, pp. 107 and 109.
[2] Not long afterwards abandoned.

Hence the article contributed to the *Enciclopedia Italiana* in 1932, which forms the subject of a close analysis in Part III. Is this Fascism ? Does it replace all the speeches and writings of past years ? Is it to be modified by reference to the speeches and writings which have followed since ? At any rate, it is a deliberate and painstaking effort, emphatically entitled to close and careful examination. It has been spoken of in Italy in the same terms of respect as the Communist Manifesto of Karl Marx : of course, as its decisive confutation. Entitled, in the view of Fascists, to the prestige of Rousseau's " Social Contract," the latter is for them but a child's babbling when compared with Mussolini's lapidary sentences ! However it would be rash to imagine that this Essay is accepted by all Fascists as the exclusive gospel. When they comment upon the Duce's contribution their praise is fulsome and their critical faculties are suspended. I am sure that the Duce, who is a realist, violently despises them for it. But when they independently write or speak about the relationship between individual and State, between industry and labour and government, between Nation and Nation, there are many deviations from Mussolini's doctrine, and even contradictions so flat, that, if their implications received practical realisation, Mussolini's system would be overthrown. This does not merely arise out of the fact that Mussolini's article is short, and has the vagueness of all concisely stated first principles, but out of real differences regarding the value of human life and the nature of human destiny. The truth is that almost everybody in Italy takes the doctrine as read (that is, does not read it), largely because no opposition to it is possible, and then, unconcernedly, proceeds on his or her own way until brought up sharply by a command. Now, for immediate practical purposes, this makes Mussolini's doctrine of central importance. Assuming that what he says he means, and that what he means will approximately find its way into the law and the encyclicals to the Fascist Party officials, the Essay is of great significance. As an index to what is universally thought and done in Italy it is of little moment. I have heard very many discussions which ended with the phrase *Insomma, Il fascismo son' io* (" Very well, then, *I* am Fascism "), to express the view that every man's interpretation is no worse nor better than anybody else's ; and I have frequently heard the

view expressed that from a few general principles it is possible quite legitimately to deduce a mass of quite contradictory implications. This is true.

To understand the actual nature of Fascism it is not enough to regard the Duce's Essay and Speeches as the alpha and omega of the system ; there are important divergences between his ideas and those of his lieutenants. Although we cannot formally review them all, the reader will notice some of the most important in the course of later chapters. These divergences of interpretation bode ill for the immortality of the Fascist régime. In the absence of an arbiter of compelling personality, have not doctrinal disputes been the most disruptive in history ?

The doctrine of Fascism is blurred not only by these differences of outlook but by its history and inherent character. A doctrine was deliberately eschewed in the early days for fear that theoretical disputes, or rather discussions of the practical application of the theories, would cause the disintegration of a party that was compounded of such ill assorted elements. The same phenomenon was witnessed in the history of the National Socialist movement in Germany, and it may now be observed also in other countries where so-called Fascist movements are under way. To be grandly vague is the shortest route to power ; for a meaningless noise is that which divides us least. Now that Fascism has dictatorial power it is faced with the double task of stating a doctrine, and then of deciding which of the alternative formulæ is to be put into practice. This has, indeed, made the path of Fascism extremely difficult. It explains existing differences, and it explains why, in spite of all the advertisement, the propaganda and the successful elimination of opposition, Fascism has achieved so little. The Government has had to tack hither and thither, take account of the diverse currents and winds, work its way around personalities, leave strong men of property alone, play off one group of industrialists against another, make laws and connive at their non-enforcement. Indeed, it looks uncommonly like Giolitti's system of a balance of domestic powers, a rotation of " spoils " and office, and the old-fashioned *trasformismo*, that is, the stealthy abandonment of one policy for another, all over again. Not that we ought to censure a Government which takes account of human nature.

But, while in this case, the Fascist Government is not sparing in its own praise, and in contempt for its predecessors, it creates very little more than they could have done, and, in contempt of human nature, has destroyed so much that was valuable and remedial of faults—I mean liberty of expression.

The democratic system of government, at any rate as it has been worked in England, proceeds upon an assumption radically different from that of the Fascist movement. It requires that all who aspire to power shall state clearly what they intend to do with it when they achieve it. This has given rise to political parties with elaborate programmes, often based upon considerable scientific research, and a sense of responsibility and trusteeship to those for whose welfare the programme is intended, and upon whose voices the accession to power will depend. It is a question of political morality of the first order whether it is right for men to demand the power to govern without first having thought out the consequences of that demand and genuinely accepted their responsibility for the execution thereof when they have attained power. To do otherwise is to work the confidence trick, which is not less dishonest because it is played on the vast stage of politics. It has the same air of super-morality about it as a company floated during the South Sea Bubble "for carrying on an undertaking of great advantage, but nobody to know what it is."

Inconsistency a Virtue. Fascists take pride in *dynamism* and *relativism*, in the sense that political doctrines and programmes are never entirely complete and finite, but only a temporary product to be made as circumstances demand and repudiated or amended when circumstances change. The maker of the doctrine, of course, is master with regard to the decision whether, and if so what, transformations are pertinent. Mussolini especially emphasises this point of view, which is, perhaps, the most important practical element in his doctrines, even though it does not receive a large place in his Essay.

"We do not believe in dogmatic programmes, in that kind of rigid frame which is supposed to contain and sacrifice the changeable, changing, and complex reality. We permit ourselves the luxury of bringing together and conciliating and surmounting in ourselves those

antitheses in which others stupefy themselves, which are fossilised in a monosyllable of affirmation or negation. We permit ourselves the luxury of being aristocrats and democrats, conservatives and progressives, reactionaries and revolutionaries, legalitarians and illegalitarians, according to circumstances of time, place and environment —in a word of the history in which we are constrained to live and to act" (March 23rd, 1921).

No one can therefore be surprised, if he finds some very bewildering and rapid *voltes-face* in the development of Fascist policy. Gentile comments[1] luminously upon this aspect of the Fascist régime, and I am obliged to confess that, though I am sure that Gentile would not joke about matters of such high importance, his remarks have the air of sly censure; and no one, surely, would regard them as complimentary:

"The doctrine of fascism is not a philosophy in the ordinary sense of the word, and much less is it a religion. It is not even an elaborated and final political doctrine, which articulates itself in a series of formulæ. The truth, the significance of Fascism, is not measured in the special theses which it assumes from time to time, theoretically and practically. As we have said, at its commencement it did not issue with a precise and determinate programme. Often having set up a target to be reached, a concept to realise, a way to follow, it has not hesitated, when tested, to change course, and to reject as inadequate, or repugnant to its own principle, that aim or that concept. It has never wished to bind itself, engaging the future. It has often announced reforms when the announcement was politically opportune, but to the execution of which it, nevertheless, did not believe itself to be obliged! The true resolutions of the Duce are always those which are both formulated and carried out."

In consequence, there is, in Italy, no elaborate and comprehensive theory of society as in Russia, though we are far from believing that Russia is free from heretics. The absence of a deeply founded sociology, held with the tenacity of fanatics, has interesting effects. There is not so much intolerance as in Russia. Indeed, there is an elasticity of doctrine, and freedom of thought, that some people think is extremely dangerous to the State. There is such a disarray of opinion that I have often asked

[1] Gentile, *Origini e Dottrina del Fascismo*, edn. 1934, p. 38.

myself whether Fascism was a "revolution," as Fascists are over-anxious to reiterate, or merely a March on Rome.

Among the justifications of this diversity is the necessity of self-criticism, or auto-criticism as it is called, once a regular opposition has been destroyed. This is credited to Mussolini's own character : he is supple-minded, and temperamentally a lover of freedom. (Though he also has traits which quash freedom in other respects.) But the limits of overt self-criticism, which are naturally wider for those whom Mussolini likes personally than for those whom he dislikes, are, in any case, narrowly drawn. If the issue were merely between Mussolini and the heretic, Mussolini might be clement. But the issue is so often between the underlings, and they are not quite so tolerant of each other, since prestige and advancement depend upon orthodoxy. A very liberal-minded Fascist, of high rank, told me that any expression of opinion was tolerated provided that it was not concerned with Yesterday but with the improvement of the Italy of To-morrow. In other words, once the régime is accepted, and obedience to Mussolini is absolute, leave is given to differ on details, so long as these are not important enough to involve the Duce's intervention. But, Yesterday ! One is asked to leave aside the lessons of man's history from the Creation until 1922 !

Perhaps such a state of mind will ultimately be cultivated in the younger generation. The older generation is less permeable, for its members are History itself. Even though they arrive fairly soon in their discussions at a point where they begin to fear to be outspoken, lest trouble should be caused them by some malicious colleague (at which point they proclaim " we cannot discuss the matter because the Duce has already given his opinion upon this "), divergent opinions are in fact somehow widely diffused. Since these cannot be converted into a political programme, as in parliamentary countries, they issue in resentments, grimaces, gestures (of which the Italian varieties are very expressive), significant reticences and omissions, and occasionally in indiscreet and bawdy outbursts. They influence the Duce, because he wants to be influenced ; he cannot help being influenced in spite of himself ; and he cannot exile or kill everybody who in greater or less degree dissents from him, for if he did he would be a Dictator in an empty country.

Now a Government founded upon such a mutable basis cannot be attacked on account of its inconsistency. Inconsistency is Fascism's life principle ; and when it is established as a system of government it obviously follows that it is a vice to be consistent. Of the usefulness to Fascist rule of this attitude there can be no two opinions. It is useful as a means to the attainment of power ; it is useful in dealing with changing situations ; it is useful, also, because ingratitude to those in office or to old friends need not be labelled ingratitude.

There are people in Italy who say that Mussolini is not averse to these differences of opinion among his subordinates. There are even some who suggest that he would, on principle, not be above fomenting them. As we shall see, he has learnt very thoroughly the lesson of *divide et impera* ; and, whatever may be the sincerity of his intentions to unite Italy, there is no doubt that the fundamental result of his efforts, however far he intended it, has been to pulverise Italy into a multitude of mutually suspicious individuals and groups.

Mussolini and his friends attained power by subverting a governmental system that had been in operation for fifty years. How did this happen ? The Fascist régime is the result of the impact of Mussolini's character upon the original weaknesses of Italian parliamentary institutions, further enfeebled by the War and its aftermath. It is important to examine first Mussolini's character, and then Italian democracy. From the former, since Mussolini *is* Fascism, we may learn to know the dynamic element in the past and future of Italian Fascism ; and from the latter we may learn how far Italian conditions differed from English.

Part II

The Birth of Fascism

Chapter II

THE MIND AND CHARACTER OF MUSSOLINI

The mind and character of Mussolini, who created and continues to evolve Fascism, can be discovered in three sources: the literature which has most influenced him, the changes and chances of the life he has lived, and the man himself in action. The information that we can glean from these sources is a remarkably illuminating explanation of the Fascist State.

I

Mussolini's Teachers

The following teachers have been ascribed to Mussolini by his friends or by himself: Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Blanqui, Georges Sorel, William James, Bergson, Vilfredo Pareto, and Machiavelli. Karl Marx is significantly not mentioned. Apart from Machiavelli, these are the brilliant lights in the intellectual firmament of the generation preceding the Great War, and even Machiavelli prompted European statesmen in that time of spiritual dissolution. We need not believe that their teachings wrote their message upon a blank and all-receptive tablet. Mussolini takes considerable pains to make it clear that he was the creative agent in the selection he made among their doctrines. In his *Autobiography* (p. 86) he says:

"I have never attached my name or my mind to a certain school, and . . . I never believed that books were absolute and sure viaticums of life."

The truth, no doubt, is that character and reading are

consonant. Henri Lagardelle, whose periodical the *Mouvement Socialiste* is given the honour of mention in Mussolini's Encyclopædia article (Sorel's most important studies first appeared in its pages), has discussed Sorel with Mussolini at length. His conclusion, elaborated to the present writer in discussion, is one that will serve the subject of Mussolini's reading in general.

Mussolini grew to maturity at a time when the whole world was writing and thinking things that rather well fitted in with his character. It was extraordinary good fortune for him that these ideas reached the stage of translation into action; and Mussolini was primarily a man of action. Thus, at this same time, the Darwinian theory of evolution, the idea of the survival of the fittest, the struggle for life, had a remarkable effect upon political ideas, but it was the vulgar notions rather than the scientific theory with all its qualifications that affected people. Yet Mussolini could also have learnt liberalism from its most famous exponent in Italy, Croce. He does not appear to have done so.

Now I shall not insist that Mussolini read all the works of all these people; I shall not insist that he read any considerable portions of any but Nietzsche and Sorel and perhaps Pareto; the rest he may very well have obtained either through these, or from that occasional quotation of pregnant sentences current in the Socialist circles he used to frequent, "intellectualoid conventicles" as he recently called them. In these conventicles much is garbled. Nor is even reading *study*. Hence in recalling what these men stood for, I shall treat only Sorel, Pareto, and Machiavelli at any length, the rest (except Nietzsche) I regard as learnt from allusions. I hope I do no injustice thereby.

Nietzsche. Nietzsche abominated the bourgeois Victorian gods. He regarded Christianity, equality, pacifism, neighbourly love and democracy as virtues invented by the weak, the craven, and the lovers of comfort, as arms deliberately directed against the forceful and creative natures. Pessimistic (only less than Schopenhauer, his master) about any possibility of human improvement, he thought he discerned some hope in the rise of a Superman. His style would be silent, solitary, resolute, but virile and heroic, meeting all trials without calculation of reward. He

would arise by evolution through the operation of the Will to Power which dominated every being, but which in weak natures degenerated into the happiness, virtue and submission calculated to ensnare and destroy the rising Superman. The world needed high moral tension, energetic struggle, sacred egoism, to live dangerously, and to be hard, the very opposites of middle-class morality. Nietzsche believed that the drive of the Will following intuition was a more certain guide in life's blind groping than intellectual calculations. He was an enemy of "grocers' philosophies" as he called the work of Mill and Spencer. He regarded the State as one of the moral creations of the mean and brainless populace to save it from the Superman.[1]

In this influence there are certain things which compel reflection. The first is the form of Nietzsche's work; the second the responsibility of statesmen compared with that of philosophers. Fundamental judgements were brilliantly, but laconically, expressed, and that at vast distance from, and outside, the human scene itself. He despised the historical, cautious, analytical method. The truths, isolated, and without proportioned relationship, are superb as sparks from a thinker's mind, but what occurs when the detachment, the aphorisms, and the promises, are appropriated by a statesman? In a free world, the thinker may feel responsible or not; it matters little. For in a *free* world, there are enough competitors to call public attention to his errors. What if the relativity of morals, and the ideal of the Superman, are applied by a practical politician, who decides without appeal the fate of human beings? Can we, then, accept the principle of responsibility to oneself alone, and the offering, nay the compulsion, of sacrifices for the good of the species? Not, I think, if the statesman exterminates all alternative views regarding the good of the species by brute force.

These questions are not merely academic, but are actually involved in Mussolini's rise to power and his subsequent activities. The philosopher or the artist may feel that his responsibility is to Art or Truth or the Species alone. Has the statesman the

[1] Mussolini's *Essay on the Philosophy of Force*, written when he was about twenty-one, occupies itself almost exclusively with Nietzsche's *Will to Power*. It is hardly more than a summary of the work, but all the points are well seized. Mussolini does not pick out, and make especially his own, any one idea beyond the rest. Cf. Sarfatti, *Dux*, 15th edn., p. 100 *et seq.*

right to put such a responsibility above the bond of trusteeship for the people? Philosophers who become kings frighten me.

Sorel. If Nietzsche owed much to Schopenhauer, the geniuses who inspired Sorel were Nietzsche, Proudhon, and Karl Marx, and to some small extent Schopenhauer also.

Sorel was a stern moralist. His chief interest was not the economic reorganisation of society, but, partly by means of this and partly beyond it, the elevation of mankind. According to him men badly needed moral stiffening and reclamation. They were naturally decadent, and would altogether rot without strong preventive measures and tonics. He hated the middle class from which he had sprung, its weakness, smugness, and complacency, its cruelty while it was establishing its power by the revolutions of the past, its violence, swindling and thievery at present employed to defend its acquired privileges. His hope centred in the working class (even as Nietzsche's, in one phase, and Mussolini's on the peasantry) who alone had hitherto contributed to Progress. For all Progress was an illusion, except the progress of technique, the clearest examples of which were to be seen in the factories and workshops.

Attempts to discover the nature of the future greatness of humanity in any detail were doomed to failure. Socialists and sociologists and Utopists had made many such unsuccessful attempts; indeed, the *intellect* could not reach so far into the future and grasp all the correlated information. It was sufficient "to march towards deliverance," and to plant the necessity to do so in the souls of the workers. (Compare Mussolini's boast: "*Sono un camminatore*": "I go ever onwards.") Deliverance! But that, we may say, is only a negative ideal. "True!" replies Sorel, "but it is impossible to give a complete picture of the future, and as practical tactics, dangerous to know it!" (This we shall meet in the evolution of the Fascist movement, enunciated by Mussolini.) All the sociologists had accomplished nothing but the damping down of the fires of enthusiasm for battle and the promised land.

Nor, because the way forward was suggested by intuition, as Bergson was then teaching, was this a less valid means to arrive at an interpretation of life, in terms of becoming something other

than you are (the life-process itself), than the paths traced by the intellect. These intellectual constructions were gravely fallible and an addition to the dead-weight of matter which the mind of man, in order to live and evolve creatively, was always obliged to subdue. The valid creative guide to the future lay in the intuition of sublime things! The inborn will to believe provided a special revelation to each individual and made certain his adherence to that belief, in spite of facts which to others as certainly supported the validity of a contrary belief.

What then? Social reform and Socialist politicians were not the means to the end which Sorel pursued. Whereas he wished to overturn middle-class society, these intended only, he came to believe, the purchase of the petty possibilities of growing fat like the bourgeoisie. Disappointed with the meliorist Jaurès, and the parliamentary Socialists, Sorel bespattered them with a stream of invective only equalled in scurrility and bitterness by Mussolini in his turn. His studies of English Trade Unions convinced him that the salvation of the worker lay within them, and not through Parliament. It was there, among their own fellows, that the revolutionary spirit would burst into flames, and remain alight; there, that the pick of the workers would rise to leadership, and fashion a new and austere moral order. While not altogether denying the usefulness of their meliorist function, he insists that this is trumpery, beside the real and inherent function of preparing the catastrophe of bourgeois society. He is at considerable pains to distinguish between political and parliamentary Socialism and the proletariat. He shows the greatest contempt for Sidney Webb: for Sorel, the myth-maker, and considered the study of Blue Books the worst preparation for revolution and working-class leadership.

Catastrophic change will not come fatally, as his great master Karl Marx had suggested, but by the active will of the workers. Therefore, Sorel created the myth of the General Strike. "The revolutionary syndicates argue about Socialist action exactly in the same manner as military writers argue about war; they restrict the whole of Socialism to the general strike; they look upon every combination as one that should culminate in this

catastrophe; they see in each strike a reduced facsimile, an essay, a preparation for the final great upheaval." (This is what Mussolini thought until he was within a step or two of supreme power.)

"The general strike is, indeed, what I have said: the *myth* in which Socialism is wholly comprised, that is, a body of images capable of evoking instinctively all the sentiments which correspond to the different manifestations of the war undertaken by Socialism against modern society. Strikes have engendered in the proletariat the noblest, deepest and most moving sentiments that they possess; the general strike groups them all in a co-ordinated picture, and by bringing them together gives to each of them its maximum of intensity; appealing to their painful memories of particular conflicts, it colours with an intense life all the details of the composition presented to consciousness."[1]

This will give hope, inspire great deeds, produce an epical frame of mind, cause the birth of individual discipline, not in the old sense of the word, but as a devoted spontaneous adhesion and voluntary submission, arising out of loyalty to the cause, to the commands of its captains, and the purposes of the association. (How Nietzschean this sounds, and how like Mussolini!) Soldiers in such causes have never asked for a *reward* equal to their efforts. Heroes will emerge along its onward path, and, as in the Churches in the past, the martyrs' sacrifice and anguish will animate succeeding generations. (We later notice Mussolini's almost verbatim application of these doctrines, and shall recognise how the martyrs of the Fascist Revolution are perpetuated, and exhibited to inspire the young. This also follows the tradition of the Risorgimento.)

Scruple about violence is a bourgeois prejudice. Violence has always been a means of—progress? No; conscience will not let him say progress—but of a new and better spirit in civilisation. And if it does not produce this, then the mere feeling of a task, a purpose, an effort, is more desirable than the fatty degeneration of the middle classes. Had not Marx said that "force is the midwife of society"? However, a certain distinction is necessary: violence does not mean force or brutality in

[1] *Reflections on Violence*, English translation (Hulme), p. 187.

the narrow sense of the word, nor is it directed against individuals, for the *system* is to blame. The world, even now, was using violence to maintain existent privileges, only that, instead of good wholesome violence, cunning, swindling and thievery had taken its place, in Parliament, Trade Union politics and on the Stock Exchange. Many sociologists believed that this was real progress, but force is far cleaner. It inspirited those who threatened the existing order ; it even inspirited the defenders.

When the Bolshevik Revolution used violence, Sorel explained that he did not mean *that* kind of force. Too late ! Whoever preaches violence, even only as a threat, and as a spiritual driving power rather than as physical brutality, can neither make average men distinguish it from the latter, nor extraordinary men stop short of brutally pursuing their own special paths along the " march towards deliverance." In Italy, also, we can observe the inability to distinguish, in spite of Mussolini's frequent admonition that violence must be limited by its surgical object. In Germany, after months and months of mental and physical torture of those who could not believe in the reigning myth, Von Papen the Vice-Chancellor of the Reich, who had helped the violent to power, had to plead with the advocates of force that there was a difference between " vitality " and " brutality " ; this ethical exposition seems to have done little good, for the " clean-up " of June 30th, 1934, occurred shortly after. The apotheosis of Sorel's doctrines was their acceptance by the anti-democrats and the monarchists of the *Action Française* ; and the awakening of the middle classes to the advantage of violence.

Lanzillo, the friend of Mussolini, a contributor to the *Avanti* from 1912, when Mussolini was its editor, a seceder from the Socialist Party when Mussolini was expelled, and later his collaborator on the *Popolo d'Italia*, points out, in his little work on Sorel,[1] " In the Latin world (Sorel's syndicalism) triumphs by the classic tradition which is the blood of our blood. It presupposes a sense of pride, a will to liberation, a breath of sacrifice. All this Sorel expresses as the *sense of the sublime*. The strike may be lost, but it will not leave the bitter disillusion of discomfiture so long as the backbone of the fighting proletariat does not bend." And

[1] Lanzillo, *Giorgio Sorel*, 1910, pp. 58, 59.

so he continues, in a style almost indistinguishable from Mussolini's own.

Pareto. Vilfredo Pareto, like his friend Georges Sorel, was an engineer. He shared Sorel's ideas regarding the function of Myths and Force in social life. Further, the theory of a Governing Class or an élite, well elaborated by Pareto, is to be found in germ in Sorel's works also. And Pareto taught the impossibility of making complete and finite social generalisations, because of the movement of things and the imponderable elements in every situation. We have been told no more than that, during his sojourn in Switzerland, Mussolini attended some of Pareto's lectures. We have not been told which, and how many, and with what industry.

In recent years there have been several small studies of the influence of Pareto on Fascism, but they proceed upon the rather unsatisfactory method of showing the affinity between the ideas of Pareto and the general political creed of the Leader of the Fascist Party.[1] There is no attempt to establish a relation of cause and effect. Mussolini's respect for Pareto is shown by his nomination of him as a Senator of Italy in 1928, shortly before his death ; and Pareto's dispassionate respect for Fascism is shown in several articles published between the end of the War and 1923. Pareto's comments, in his *Trattato di Sociologia Generale*, on the riots of June 1914, riots which Mussolini, then insignificant, inflamed but did not conduct, are all in the revolutionary but not the Fascist tendency.

The outstanding features of Pareto's work, declared to have been influential in forming the Fascist view of government, are the importance of Myths in government, the theory of the circulation of élites or governing classes, the relationship between force and consent, and the necessary relativism of social generalisation and the policies of governments.

Pareto begins with a profound study of the relationship between the permanent interests, dispositions, and tendencies of mankind, and the reasonings, theories and verbal manifestations

[1] For example, Scalfatti, *Studi Paretiani*, 1923, p. 98 ff. ; Morselli, *Pareto e la politica di Mussolini*. But cf. Bousquet's account of the subject in *Pareto : sa vie et ses doctrines*.

by which men excuse, justify and promote them. The former he calls "residues"; and the latter "derivations." The former are *constant*, the latter vary with time and place; the former are original, and hardly to be altered or diverted, the latter are masks and superstructures.

He observes that sentiment is more efficacious than interest in making social measures acceptable, especially if it is exalted and assumes the form of a religion: "expressed by enthusiastic derivations, overstepping cold reality, and very different from the sceptical reasonings of logic-experimental sciences." To arrive at a given social objective, it is necessary to urge people beyond it, to a point further off. Their enthusiasm can be worked up to that pitch by myths, and even then the usual practical difficulties will depress it to the objective originally aimed at. It is a mistake, he urges, to believe that obedience will be given readily as soon as all people are "educated," that is when they can grasp logical experimental reasons. Utilitarians and Positivists, who are supposed to have replaced all considerations and sentiments by the calculus of cold reason, need the guidance of fables as much as children do. They need the motive forces of religion, ethics, patriotism, humanitarianism, fidelity to party and class. Hence the history of battles between the Good and the Bad, the clash of religions, of asceticism and worldliness, of Progress, Pacifism, Truth, Justice and their opposites. It may be useful that man shall think that certain doctrines are in conformity with experience when in fact they are not. The "truth" and utility have been confused, when people have affirmed that it is always useful for oneself and society that man should see facts in their "true" light. Pareto enquires carefully into the psychological causes of the various forms of self-deception and desertions of principle which men go through in order to get the greatest advantage while preserving the air of morality.

By "élite" Pareto means the people who have in a remarkable degree the qualities of intelligence, character, address, and capacity. He observes that in any society there is an élite of government and an élite in other fields of life, and below these two are the ordinary folk. The superior part of the nation is subdivisible into a part which specialises in government. From this must always be excluded a not inconsiderable number who

have arrived at the title without possessing the talent, by some route like birth or wealth, which produce serious deviations from the true qualities of the governing élite. There is a continuous, even if slow, circulation of élites. The beliefs, prejudices, and opinions of society are different in the upper and the lower grades, and these differences of pressure, as it were, cause the circulation. Some more energetic belief comes from below, and the masses exert a pressure upon the upper classes. Like waves they break over, and swamp, the scepticism of the upper classes.

For a time, aristocracies are dominant by reason of their character, or their war-like, commercial, or plutocratic power. In the course of time their energy diminishes. Others climb up and take their place. Normally there is a continual and slow transformation, a movement like a river; but sometimes there is a complete change in the governing class, a sudden flood: that is, a revolution. The general cause of a revolution is that too many weaklings have gained a footing in high places. They are not capable of using force to preserve their position, but below there are many capable and ruthless candidates for power. This number accumulates slowly; the upper class tries to buy off its adversaries; reputation and prestige keep the pressure on this side of the revolution more than equal to the pressure on the other side. Suddenly, however, the diaphragm between is ruptured.

The governing class adopts various methods to maintain its position. The élite may kill the clever insurgents. This is final, but it has the terrible disadvantage that society as a whole loses by the destruction of creative qualities. A second method is *persecution*. This is not very useful, for it makes martyrs, and the insurgents become even more dangerous than if they had been left alone. Sometimes persecution is advantageous to the nation, because it stimulates the energy and character of the persecuted, who, thus fortified, triumph.

At this point, Pareto gives the specially apt example of the revolutionary situation known as the Red Week which arose in Italy in June 1914, just before the outbreak of the War. The Premier, Signor Salandra, spoke to the Prefects of using force if necessary, but spoke sadly and regretfully of such a contingency;

"humbly and abjectly" as Pareto says.[1] But the Socialist journal, *Avanti*, then edited by Mussolini, regarded the cessation of the General Strike as a regrettable event, and smacked its lips over its magnitude and fury while it lasted. In its leading article there is a certain note of regret that the number of deaths was smaller than in May 1898. It regards the *Confederazione Generale del Lavoro's* action in declaring its cessation, and the action of the railwaymen, who took three days to decide *not* to participate in the strike, as the only things to be regretted in the experience. A period of social peace now sets in, but it is to be used in preparation for the next struggle to overthrow reformism and democracy, to be prepared in every way when the red trumpets blow again for the greatest and decisive battle."

Pareto comments :

"One is present literally at the fight between the fox and the lion. On the one side victory is expected from cunning; not a word in which one can see the courageous and virile spirit of those who possess a faith. On the other side, the opposite qualities. To the Government which does not want to be called the enemy by its adversaries, the latter respond that they are and will remain its enemies, to them and to every other similar Government; and truly, not to realise that one must be blind and deaf. In this way the men of the *Avanti* demonstrate those qualities of virility and loyalty which sooner or later assure victory, and which finally are useful to the whole nation. . . . In Italy, 'general strikes' are the more or less revolutionary riots which trouble the peace of the country, are due in great measure to the resistance of the Government to the point where it excites the anger of its adversaries, assures their union, and provokes their insurrection, and then stops at the precise point where it could repress it. If the Government follows this plan, it is not due to ignorance, but because, on the model of all Governments of almost all the civilised countries of our time, the fact that they represent the 'speculators' closes every other way to them. The 'speculators' want tranquillity above all which will permit them to carry through their lucrative operations. They are disposed to buy this tranquillity at any price. They occupy themselves with the present, take little thought for the future, and without the least scruple sacrifice their defenders to the anger of their adversaries."[2]

A third method pursued by governing classes anxious to

[1] *Trattato*, Paragraph 1647.
[2] Paragraphs 1646–1658.

protect the social equilibrium is exile and ostracism, the advantages of which outweigh its disadvantages. The final method is to secure the eager and promising recruits from the lower class on the condition that they serve the élite on its own terms. This is what has always been done ; and it is above all the method used by " demagogic plutocracies." (This is what Sorel so strongly condemned in parliamentary Socialism.) But the governing class does not help itself for very long if the only people it can seduce are those who are easily bought. *Yet Pareto does not consider the case, which is perhaps Mussolini's, that of a member of the lower class accepting the wages of the upper class, only to turn on them when, well-established and well-armed, he has opened the doors of the citadel to his revolutionary friends.*

Let us now turn to Pareto's doctrine on Force in government, the theme in later years of a famous article by Mussolini in *Gerarchia*, certainly embodying the master's arguments, and almost reciting the master's words.

" In general," says Pareto, " societies exist because the sentiments which correspond to the residues of sociability are alive and powerful in the majority of their members. But in human societies there are also individuals in whom a part at least of these sentiments weaken and may even disappear. Thence there flow two very important effects, which apparently are contradictory ; the one threatens the dissolution of the society, the other causes the emergence of civilisation."

The need for order felt by individuals does not exist in sufficient proportion automatically to produce a condition of stability between these two extremes. Individuals are very different, so that a balance is attained only by the action of society. The need for social uniformity is the more extensive as it is weak in individuals. In the course of time, the contrasting theologies in which men project their feelings, Habit and Progress, arrive at a balance.

Now there is no sense in making a problem of whether or not one should use force in society, or asking whether it is advantageous or not, because, in fact, force is employed as much by those who want to conserve certain uniformities as by those who want to transgress them. On this point Sorel's *Reflections on*

Violence is cited as an authority. The violence of the former is opposed to the violence of the latter. In fact, whoever is favourable to the governing class and says that he disapproves of the use of force, disapproves, in fact, only of the use of force by the dissidents who wish to withdraw from the rules of uniformity (or obedience). If he says that he approves the use of force, he really approves the use of it which is made by the authorities to compel the dissidents to obey. And the converse arguments are valid for the governed.

We should rather consider which of the existing laws are useful, and which disadvantageous, to society. Even that is not all. Does the damage which is being done by existing rules greatly exceed that which results from the use of the force to destroy them? Anarchy springs from the too frequent use of force. On the other hand Order has a value in itself, even when a social fabric not wholly satisfactory is based upon it. Thus, the net advantage, all the conditions in a particular situation being taken into account, must decide the question of the use of force.

Many pages of Pareto's treatise are closely prophetic of events in Italy in the years 1919–1922. Their spirit is this: that in the event of a rising against the governing class, as soon as the myths fail of effect, and the rational merits of the government are disputed, the governing class must use force to maintain itself.

"If among the governed there are a certain number of individuals disposed to use force, and if they have capable leaders, one often sees the governing class dispossessed, and another take its place. *This comes about easily if the governing class is moved by humanitarian sentiments. . . .*".

There is, of course, an attempt to avoid the use of force by bringing into play abstractions like the "State" and "Order," by appeals for respect for the character of the men in office, by abuse of those who desire to overturn the existing order. In the end force enters.

"All Governments use force and all affirm that they are founded on reason. . . . In fact, with or without universal suffrage, it is always

an oligarchy which governs, and which knows how to give whatever expression it likes to the 'popular will.' . . ."

If Pareto shows any preference it is for force rather than cunning, for force is the exterior sign by which is manifested the substitution of the strong and energetic for the feeble and cowardly! (Yet Pareto seems to me to be biased against perfectly honest reasoning, calling it cunning, which probably consisted of the kind of reasons Pareto personally disliked.) Faith and will are necessary to the use of force, and these qualities are essential elements in the welfare of a nation.

An integral and fundamental part of Pareto's teaching is the impossibility of including the whole world of actual phenomena in a scientific generalisation: "Scientific laws are for us nothing but *experimental* uniformities." The laws are contingent, relative, and but approximate. Far from certain, even approximations are important guides. But the generalisation is never complete and closed: experience will reveal more things to cause us to change our minds. And a further reason for diffidence and self-doubt is the number of imponderable elements, that is factors in the situation which are incapable of quantitative measurement. It is clear that considerations such as Pareto urges here would compel a reasonable man to doubt his own beliefs and, therefore, be tolerant of opposition. It might cause another man (Mussolini, for example) to say, "Nevertheless, *if I am to govern*, I must be dogmatic, and the only lesson Pareto teaches me is not to stick stubbornly to a policy, even though it has been promised, as soon as the circumstances require a different line of action."

Machiavelli. A romantic story told by Signora Sarfatti shows us Mussolini and his father, the village blacksmith and local politician, reading Machiavelli in the ill-lit smithy. In later years, the Florentine Secretary still over-occupied Mussolini's mind. In 1924, he refused the honorary degree offered him by the University of Bologna, declaring that he would, like any other student, submit a thesis for the degree in the ordinary manner —a pretty gesture in every sense!

The thesis was never completed, but the Prelude to it was

published in *Gerarchia* for 1924.[1] Scanning the chapters of *The Prince* and the *Discorsi*, Mussolini asks what living worth they contain after the passage of four centuries. What does Machiavelli think of the nature of man? Is he optimistic or pessimistic? Mussolini concludes that even a superficial reading of *The Prince* reveals an acute pessimism. Like all who have a wide experience of men, Machiavelli is obliged to expose their baseness and servility.

"As all those who reflect upon political life demonstrate, and as history is full of examples thereof, it is necessary for those who govern a State and decree the laws therein, to presuppose that all men are vicious and that they will always be prone to exert the malignity of their souls whenever they get the opportunity to do so. . . . Men never do good except by necessity, but where there is liberty and licence everything falls into confusion and disorder."[2]

Mussolini says that he cannot attenuate Machiavelli's verdict, he might even aggravate it. He quotes with evident relish this question from *The Prince*, "Whence does it arise that all the armed prophets win, but the unarmed are ruined?" Mussolini paraphrases the answer, "Because the nature of peoples is variable and it is easy to persuade them of a thing, but difficult to keep them in that persuasion." And then he quotes *The Prince's* answer: "And therefore it is proper that things should be so regulated that when they no longer believe they can be made to believe by force. Moses, Cyrus, Theseus, Romulus, would never have been able to get their constitutions respected for long had they been disarmed."

Is not this an extraordinary opinion for a man who seeks the dictatorship over his countrymen, and as great an influence on the rest of the world as conditions will allow his imperious will to exercise? Why, then, should a pessimist, as Mussolini gives himself out to be, wade through terror to a throne? Why should he assume the heartbreaking task of government? Why constrain these poor, weak, querulous, earthbound creatures to "the bath of blood," as he called the War, and the aftermath of repression and dictatorial discipline, if nothing better can come

[1] Now reprinted in *Scritti*, IV., 105 ff.
[2] Machiavelli, *Discorsi*, Chap. III.

of it, even as nothing better, according to Machiavelli, could come, or has come, of the Italians of four hundred years ago?

Benedetto Croce, the philosophical and political opponent of Fascism, is also pessimistic in tone. Indeed, there are pages of Croce's *Principles of Politics*[1] which read quite as harshly as Mussolini's direst judgements of mankind. But there the agreement ends. For Croce would say that, seeing that the nature of men is what it is, and is apparently unalterable, it is better not to treat them too harshly, better not expect that measures of coercion will lift them to levels where they cannot breathe, at any rate for long. It is better, simply, to teach and persuade them within the narrow range of choice which lies before them. Any salvation lies only in peaceful persuasion.

Government by Pessimists? We may well ask whether convinced pessimists have a right to the reins of government. They are, we think, apt to be sadistic in their repression of any buoyancy and hope which does not accord with their cast of mind. The truth is that Mussolini is not a genuine pessimist. Whatever some Italians may whisper to me, he is *not* of the school of Schopenhauer. If he believes he is a pessimist, he has not yet arrived at the complete understanding of himself. He is, indeed, rather of the school of Nietzsche and William James, of whom he read, if anything, only the four Essays published by Papini in a popular Italian series. He acts as though he believes that there is room for improvement in this very difficult world. We have choices which are more desirable than those around us to-day, and they can be realised if doctrines of hope, endeavour, and religious determination are brought into play by the extraordinary of the race. The mass of mankind keeps to sea-level; but the level may be raised if the volcanic eruption of the geniuses raises the bottom and the mass as well. This may be Mussolini's real creed. If not, then the never-ending spate of exhortations flowing down upon the people of Italy is waste and delusion, and so are the activities of the Government.

The article, however, may have been simply the pose of the politician of culture, designed to show that the man was well-read and knowing. Or, genuinely convinced of what he sincerely

[1] Cf. *Etica e Politica*, 1931.

meant to express, he has taken power not because he expected to accomplish anything worth the cost from the standpoint of the people who continue to pay it, but out of the sheer craving for power. In an artistic, primitive nature, this is quite a possible explanation. Power has not been sought for its service, but as the result of an almost blind, unrestrainable, instinct.

The final explanation is that, as usual, Mussolini has not carefully and patiently dissected his material. In politics, more than in any other field of study, the method of microscopic examination is indispensable. Yet this is the last thing that people will understand. For success in government, if the objects are regarded as more important than the mere enjoyment of ordering other people about, the method of quantitative analysis is vital. Once in the seat of government, the truth of this becomes painfully obvious, because human beings and material things are intractable if they are harnessed in rules not consonant with their nature. The broad, thick, wood-cut, absolute views, of either Yes or No, either Black or White, either Man-is-Good or Man-is-Bad, damage political thought and frustrate political good. Somewhere on the minutely-graded scale between the two absolutes lies the proper measurement of mankind's potentiality and hope.

However, it was the *unproportioned* view of human nature in Italian politics which blazed Mussolini's way to power. To understand all is perhaps to forgive all ; but in politics this may require the treatment of opponents with such a degree of fairness that one's own advent to power is too long deferred. All of Mussolini's speeches and writings show this proneness to overstrong views. It is intimately involved with his determination to secure power. Once in power, however, he has had to act like any other man who wishes to retain it : that is, with a sense of trusteeship arithmetically adjusted to the diverse interests which compose the people, and a not unwholesome respect for the geographical and geological condition of his country. He has deliberately given national currency to an unknown soldier's phrase, " Better the life of a lion for a day, than that of a sheep for a hundred years ! " Yet if he has continued to roar who will say that he still springs ? Of what use was the " Revolution," when the old governing class was

attacked hip and thigh precisely because it acknowledged the force of circumstances, and carried its policies by weaving compromises among so many conflicting interests?

I have had to insist upon this at some length because Mussolini has had a considerable influence upon many people, not the least important constituent of which is this crude, black-and-white picture of the world, and its use to persuade people to lend him the force to arrive and govern.

Summary. For what had the selected assimilation of the teachings of his masters prepared Mussolini?

To assert the claims of a consciousness more fundamental than intellect,[1] and in its name to deny the fatalism and nihilism of the intellectuals (though negation is, like other faiths, an act of passion and not of intellect) and proudly to vindicate the claims of sacred egoism and the will to power (for himself, but not for others). Scornfully to deny the equality of men, countering its appeal with a Hierarchy, the élite, taking the masses into wardship. To cast down the idols of the bourgeoisie, and above all, the great God Comfort. To lead men to a destiny chosen by him and not by themselves, incarnating this in a Myth, which should be by day a cloud, and a pillar of fire by night, to draw them on to the places he had promised them; and, as the Race or the Species transcend the individual, to stick at no violence to destroy the old order or the opponents of the new. To teach men to love a Grandeur far above the small coin of the standard of living. To hate the State until *he* should become the State, when it would be made the object of universal and compulsory worship, or if not that, then of obedience through Fear. To scatter the champions, discredit the doctrines, and destroy the institutions of representative government. To put the individual into a yoke, in the name of coming generations, on the ground that all life is a continuous flux and process, in which the individual is an insignificant speck compared with the Nation and the Race. It must be understood, however, that not one of the men whom Mussolini introduces as his teachers taught or

[1] Reinforced by James's pragmatism, the "will to believe" and the idea that one's belief in the truth of a thing will stimulate to efforts that will make the belief true indeed.

intended to teach mankind to act as Mussolini has done. Their *complete* works, and their lives, repudiate him.

II

Mussolini's Early Career

In the last thirty years Mussolini has changed his immediate objective many times, but he has arrived at dictatorial power. Two points in his career are fixed : his birth, and October 28th, 1922, when he crossed the Rubicon in a *wagon-lit* on the way to Rome. Between those two points there winds a zigzag path, sometimes even doubling back on itself, when doctrines and persons threaten to obstruct the way to Power. Nor can it be said that his path since 1922 has, politically or economically, been less devious—but he has retained Power. He lived from day to day, changing his jobs, moving from the less to the more promising, discarding doctrines and picking up new ones, taking risks of total defeat, and he arrived at Power. He confesses, "In all that I did, and still more, in all that I suffered, I had a definite foreboding that I was being trained for a more important position."[1] In other words, he wanted power, he took the necessary steps to get it, and felt its constant imminence. What he hoped for he was always moving towards, and the wish, the planning, and the movement, gave him faith in the benevolence of destiny.

The life of Mussolini is a life of turbulent and violent movement towards political power. He was born in 1883 of a peasant family, in a tiny village, Predappio, near Forlì, in Romagna. The family was poor, but all the members were apparently of robust physique, an important gift for a statesman who is destined to rise by insurrection. Mussolini, who is very superstitious, writes of his birthday : " The sun had since eight days entered in the constellation of the Lion." The Italians are abnormally superstitious, even among agricultural peoples. *The Lion !* One of the little popular books about Mussolini spreads the astrologer's comment : " It reveals his desire for greatness, glory and power."[2]

[1] To Emil Ludwig, *Talks with Mussolini*, p. 54.
[2] Clarisettini, *Mussolini Immaginario*, 85 ff.

Mussolini's father was a local blacksmith, and the smithy was the club for his political cronies, the Anarchist-Socialists of the school of Bakunin and adherents of the first International. Andrea Costa had set up a branch at Forlì in 1874. Misery, poverty and incessant toil in the fields for less than a pittance were the lot of the peasantry. For them Socialism was not a middle-class intellectual diversion but revolt against the bitter oppression of landowners, municipalities and Government. They were not without their glow of generosity, for the tradition of Mazzini and Garibaldi, a volunteer for France in 1870, had kindled and kept a flame alive. What this really meant to them no one can say, for they were steeped in an unbelievable ignorance of everything outside their need to keep body and soul together, and this phrase is not used in a conventional sense. The conservative Governments of the time regarded persecution, not reform, as the proper policy. There were long imprisonments for sedition and conspiracy; the breaking up of processions; stormy and sometimes farcical trials; brutal inquisitions, riots, and shootings. Yet the movement prospered. Mussolini's father became the leading member of the local group of the International. In the very year in which Mussolini was born, his father carried in procession, in commemoration of Garibaldi, a flag with the words, "We will live free if we can work, or die fighting!"[1] A scuffle took place with the police, arrests were made, the accused were acquitted at the trial.

Childhood and Exile. The boy Mussolini at ten years of age was doubtless sufficiently curious in political matters to share the indignation felt and stirred up by his father. The stories came in every day of petty oppression, of neighbours' troubles, and through the newly founded socialist newspapers, of the great world outside the village. No exaggeration was needed to make the tactics of the Government appear in a black light. What rumours would he hear from the gesticulating group round the fire, sipping the free wine handed round by the valiant and magnanimous host: what "pressures past, that youth and observation copied there"? In 1898 they were cursing the brutal and bloody repression of the Sicilian *fasci*.

[1] Cf. Bonavita, *Mussolini Svelato*, 1924; *Il Padre del Duce*, 1928.

Following the example of Catania, where in 1890 a workers' association had been founded under the name of the *Fascio dei Lavoratori*, many such associations had spread all over Sicily. At first their purpose was simply that of the mutual benefit society, but later they turned to Socialist propaganda, and fought the iniquitous municipal authorities. They wanted agricultural co-operative societies, and the abolition of municipal taxes on consumption (especially on flour), the principal, and in some places almost the only, source of local revenue. But the situation of the peasantry was indeed terrible, a situation more than servile upon the great *latifundia*, managed for absentee landlords by extortionate stewards. The laws of 1806 and 1812, obliging the municipalities to break up the great feudal estates, had been nullified by the resale of the land to the old owners at low prices by their friends on the local councils. The backward condition of agriculture was the excuse as well as the cause of misery without hope of alleviation. The budget was charged with debt largely contracted by the North in its effort for national unity and industrial progress. There were hardly any public works; justice was tainted; the police were harassed; the mayors of the municipalities were agents of the bourgeoisie; the Mafia was an organised banditry to defend the upper classes. In the sulphur-mining districts conditions were appalling.

Almost spontaneously, as the result of insupportable conditions, and not of Socialist agitation, the movement came to embrace 200,000 members in 800 *fasci*; the leaders were men of the lower middle and professional classes.

There was no general rising, but a series of episodes: invasions of the town halls, the burning of the archives, the smashing of the local *octroi* barriers, the liberation of prisoners. The Central Government, bound up with the ruling bosses, since it relied upon them for returning its candidates at general elections, tergiversated, and intervened with violent and bloody repression, the re-establishment of the taxes upon consumption (after a pacifying temporary suspension), and the worthless promise of the Prime Minister, Francesco Crispi, himself a Sicilian, to take measures for a general improvement of conditions. Thousands were imprisoned, and in January, 1894, the general who was sent to deal with what Crispi thought to be a revolution aiming

at separation from Italy, proclaimed a state of siege and arrested the chiefs of the *fasci*. These were denied counsel, given savage periods of imprisonment, and, to add to the romantic horror with which the whole affair had inspired all Italy, the condemned were taken away from the island at dead of night.

The whole of Italy was excited, so much so that the workers in Carrara and the Massese, far away from Sicily, themselves not personally involved but the carriers of a tradition of Mazzinian and anarchist insurrection, rose in sympathy. The sympathetic bourgeoisie were scandalised ; a strong impetus was given to the Socialist movement, signalised first by so-called candidatures "of protest" ; and, then, in the elections of 1895, twelve Socialists were returned in place of the former five, of which three were condemned leaders of the *fasci*.

The pathologically suspicious Crispi, impetuous, instinctive, and therefore blind, secured the passage of anti-anarchy laws in 1894, and proceeded in the October of that year to decree the dissolution of all Socialist clubs and societies, and systematic persecution of Socialist leaders. The bourgeoisie in general, not less than Crispi, was dreadfully frightened at the rise of this revenging force.

That is the stuff upon which the young Mussolini was nourished. Only four years later, in 1898, came the "Terrible Year," of the Bread Riots, when 400 people were killed in Milan alone ; 828 were arrested of whom 688 were given savage sentences, among them Turati, the Socialist leader, who was condemned to twelve years. Social war, short truces, and social war again, martial law, the excited discussion of the theme never left an interval sufficient for the nation to forget till the Great War and beyond it. Mussolini heard Crispi's rise and fall discussed, Crispi, who sought to make Italy great by the extension of her sea power, by the acquisition of Colonies, by defiance of France who had taken Nice and Savoy and had troubled United Italy for years by championing the Pope. Crispi ended disastrously ; but the attempt was *patriotic*. Mussolini and the Fascists have made a hero of Crispi.

At elementary school, where in the earliest years his mother taught, Mussolini was precocious but restless, pugnacious, combative and domineering. There are stories of stone-throwing

fights, and they may be true ; similar stories are told of Napoleon's boyhood ; many other boys also threw stones. He does not seem to have been a good mixer with other boys, preferring his own company in the fields and lonely places.

Only those who have actually lived in poverty, where one potato more or less is a critical issue for the ever-empty purse, can know what lessons in human nature are there learnt. Only those who have been born into a family on the margin of starvation, and into a house so poor and dark and wretched as the one still to be seen in Predappio, with others in the house whose pains and forced deprivations of the barest necessities were constant, can divine the stimulus to compassion aroused for the weak and unfortunate, the resentment at the causes and personal agents of social and economic inequality. That resentment grows, a powerful mind sees that such inequality is not founded on virtue but on inheritance. These families with extraordinary qualities and no inheritance judge harshly, as callously as the social system which oppresses them closes it ears to their just complaints.

At the wish of his mother, who is said to have discerned extraordinary abilities in her son, Mussolini went on to a secondary education at a school maintained by a religious order, though his father was a savage anti-clerical. The original tendencies in him persisted. Quick, intelligent, clever, studious, he was yet a lover of solitude, imposing himself on others or staying away from them, and not yielding to punishment. There was, and is, a final reserve about him. With the idea of becoming a teacher, the easiest exit for the more intelligent and ambitious from the lower classes, Mussolini proceeded to a Training College. Graduating from this, he tried to secure a clerkship in the Municipality close to his home. It was refused him owing to political prejudice against his father, and he left to become an elementary school teacher. His forty pupils occupied his time only until early in the afternoon. It was then that the nineteen-year-old young man began that process of self-tuition which was perforce his substitute for the University education which the younger bourgeoisie with whom he had to contest the supremacy in the leadership, first of Socialism, and then of the nation, had already enjoyed or were still enjoying. He was an autodidact. The autodidact is freer than University men to form independent views ; but a University

streams met. These were the critical days when Marxism was fighting for its life against the criticisms of the Reformist school, spreading from the Fabians by way of Bernstein into the German Social Democratic Party. There emerged, Reformism for Germany, Revolutionary Syndicalism for France and Italy, and Bolshevism for Russia. All schools were, however, agreed that the bourgeois world was pernicious and must be destroyed. Mussolini agreed with them ; and as the authorities learnt this, they expelled him from Switzerland. He hated the bourgeois masters none the less for that.

So far Mussolini. But de Ambris[1] publishes evidence given by people who were in Lausanne at the time. They say that Mussolini asked them for help (being Socialists) and explained that he had left Italy to avoid military service, which was about due. They say that he lived partly on the benevolence of his compatriots, and by lectures for which they recommended him ; that his only ideas were two, anti-clericalism and anti-militarism, and that in the expression of these he was especially violent. He was expelled from Geneva for falsifying his passport. Then, according to Mussolini himself, once back in Italy he was called to the Army, served for three months, and was then exempted on the death of his mother, (de Ambris gives the impression that he returned because he would not put up with the hardships of the exiles' life.) He returned to elementary school teaching for a year ; for another he taught French at a private school. The de Ambris evidence insists that he lived on the charity of the family of Serrati, the Socialist exile, who stayed in Switzerland. At the end of 1908 he returned home for a short spell. His present friends say he was much saddened by the internecine strife of working-class parties and trade unions grouped in the Socialist Party, the " reds," against the Republican Party, the " yellows." However, as we shall see, he did as much as he could to inflame the struggle.

In February 1909 came a decisive turning point in his career. He became Secretary of the Chamber of Labour in Trento, then Austrian. Two Socialist newspapers appeared there, the one of Austrian tendency, and the other, *Il Popolo*, founded and

[1] Cf. Alceste de Ambris, *Mussolini* ; (*Pagine Dell' Italia Libera*) May–July 1930. N. 7–8. Marseille.

directed by Cesare Battisti, the organ of the Italian Socialists who looked to the redemption of the Trentino. Mussolini became editor of *Il Popolo*, and inspired by Battisti's Socialism and patriotism and the opportunities, made an outstanding success of his job. Here was Mussolini's first direct everyday contact with issues which made him nationalist. His Italian Socialist friends were treated with contempt, and abandoned by their Austrian class-colleagues. The Italian *conservative* bourgeoisie (the liberals were irredentists) lived quite satisfied under Austrian rule, acquiescent in the oppression of their working-class compatriots so long as their own economic and social situation was secure. It was secure under the yoke of an Emperor, generally known by the Italians not as the *Imperatore* but as the *Impiccatore* (the hangman), whose officers firmly applied persecution and imprisonment. Within a few months Mussolini personally felt the weight of the hand of the Austrian Government, and was given cause for bitter resentment against the Dual Empire. Patriotic considerations received an admission, or a strengthening, in his philosophy of the State. He was expelled from Trento for having written in his paper: "The Italian frontier does not stop at Alà." His friendship with Battisti was also ruptured, for reasons we do not know. Mussolini's violent assertiveness had probably something to do with it.

These experiences occurred just at the time when Italy was recoiling from idealistic anti-militarism and cosmopolitanism, the heritage of the Risorgimento. There was a reaction, long due, against foreign contempt for Italy, the sneer at "Italietta," a kind of national self-recollection. Italy was also the home of a significant ferment of idealism in general. Mussolini was swimming with the stream when he struck out, and his strokes helped the stream along. We cannot dwell at any length on this at present. But it can be said here that the spirit destructive of the middle-class gods, the spirit of Nietzsche and Sorel, was permeating Italy.

Mussolini was now twenty-six years of age. His own generation was in the first upward flight of its creativeness. Each member contributed to the common flow of ideas and moral force, and each member took from it also. Young men like Mussolini, accustomed to few material comforts, by their own nature hardly

asking for or needing much, were now assimilating a spirit of endeavour, self-sacrifice, and human grandeur, by which they would in the future not only judge and govern themselves and their friends, but nations also, should they ever obtain the chance. Mussolini's experiences in the Trentino were digested in a pamphlet, " Trentino as seen by a Socialist," published in *La Voce,* of Florence, the organ of idealism and pragmatism. In this he vilifies the bourgeoisie, derides the racial theories which would make the Germans the natural and eternal governors over their Italian, non-Nordic, and therefore degenerate, subjects. He places nationality above class as the lesson of Trent politics, and insists that the Italians there shall have the right and the moral obligation to use the Italian language.

The Socialist Agitator. Mussolini was now launched on the career of publicist and organiser, which in the Italy of that time meant agitator, in the Socialist cause. He was called to the secretaryship of the Socialist Association at Forlì in his native province, where in 1910 he founded a newspaper, *La Lotta di Classe* (*The Class Struggle*). He had already contributed to the organ of the revolutionary wing, the *Avanguardia Socialista,* of Milan, founded in 1899 to oppose the orthodox leaders. The title of his paper was another sign of his alignment with that clever powerful group of militant Socialists. Led by Arturo Labriola, this group levelled its guns at the reformists, Filippo Turati and Claudio Treves, Leonida Bissolati and Ivanoe Bonomi. In fact, the entry of the reformist school's candidates into Parliament had raised the question of the title of the Party paper. When first founded in 1892, it had been called the *Lotta di Classe,* the name which Mussolini later appropriated. Then it was renamed *Avanti ! (Forwards !).*

Mussolini held the Forlì secretaryship until he passed on to the national stage of politics at the Socialist Congress of 1912. The two years were very eventful, and the character of the man, nearing thirty, offspring of a people which matures early, began to show traits which are now familiar to the world. He was entering the fullness of his powers. The violence of the volcano, hitherto held within the earthy sides deep down, giving only occasional signs in the pages of essays and small-town

newspapers, suddenly burst forth, fierce, uncompromising. His father died this year, and such a final loss, to men of Mussolini's temperament, is often the last release from compunctions and doubts. Henceforth, what is recognised as evil must be smitten without ceasing and without scruple. It is perhaps at this time that Mussolini discovers in himself the question which we shall meet again as a justification for war : " Whether anything brings a man so directly face to face with the nature of ideals, as the possibility of having to die for them ? "

He threw himself into Socialist politics with the extraordinary ardour of an extraordinary man. He was determined to revive the power of the *piazza* (the market-place), the spontaneous voice of the mob. That tradition to settle issues by a riot[1] had roots centuries deep in Italian politics. Already people were tiring of the Socialist parliamentary group, and the slow process of social reform. The work of Sorel, especially *L'Avenir Socialiste des Syndicats Ouvriers*, translated into Italian in 1903, was inflaming Socialist strategy. This suited Mussolini's temperament as nothing else did. He was, and is, possessed by the need for action. He had led the crowd to the Town Hall to get the price of milk reduced under threat of violence to the Mayor and Council. He had led the peasants against the reaping machines. He led the crowd to destroy a pillar in the Piazza of Forlì which had long been a subject of dispute among local politicians. All petty actions of the Provinces, but indicative. By 1910 he had already been before the Courts twice for disturbances of the peace. In 1910, he was found guilty of publishing defamatory articles. Some articles on anti-militarism got him a spell of imprisonment in 1911.

While the Italian Socialist movement had been proscribed and persecuted until 1904, the leaders had been not only unchallenged, but venerated. Middle-class idealists, as well as the working classes, had believed that their political hopes were within the Party, under the supreme direction of the early leaders, who led the way by a Fabian path. By 1906, a strong current of revolt was flowing, signalised by mutual criticism and dissension, especially at the Annual Congresses. Mussolini was a man of the Left, an uncompromising opponent of the

[1] Cf. Trevelyan, *Historical Causes of the Present State of Italy* (Oxford), 1928.

parliamentary crowd, and, if not a proletarian himself, at least the son of a genuine proletarian. He conducted a campaign of gross insults: the Socialist deputies were "parliamentary paralytics," and for them Montecitorio[1] was the summit of Socialism! When Bissolati visited the King, Mussolini wired the Party Executive, "Liquidate the Giolittian Bissolati, or fifty groups of the Forlì Federation will leave the Party!" He was threatened with excommunication. He answered that the order of the day was cretinous and inspired by the most stupid sectarianism. He preached the continuing social revolution, and inveighed against all who softened the authentic worker's repudiation of capitalism, for their fraternisation with the social enemy, for their assumption of middle-class manners and mode of life, their peaceful, step-by-step tactics, their compromising acceptance of the procedure of the Parliament at Rome. He spoke all in the vein of Sorel when, in his monthly journal, *L'Uomo Nuovo*, he said:

"To-day there no longer come from the University young rebels in life and thought, but precocious old men, terribly serious, with petty outlooks, eager for clients and jobs, ready for any kind of genuflection, for any kind of sale of conscience. To-day, the subversives, directors of the political and economic movement, when they are not bureaucrats, are careerists—sometimes paid with the salaries of cardinals—they are lecturers who exercise an indecent speculation on their work of propaganda, they are revolutionists who do not believe in the revolution, they are half-consciences, half-cultures, half-men. The ideal? To the devil with it! No one any longer believes in it. And if it happens that some solitary person believes, he is defined as an imbecile who flirts with the moon. *We still belong to that exiguous handful of solitary persons.*"[2]

He reviled the policy of the Party, which sought petty gains in social legislation, wages and conditions (which were, however, the fruit of the sacrifices, the imprisonment and social ostracism of the leaders between 1898 and Mussolini's time), not on the grounds that the gains were petty, but because such material welfare was made the be-all and the end-all of Socialist striving. He fulminated against what English people of his time called

[1] The seat of the Italian Parliament in Rome. It is like saying "Westminster."

[2] Succeeding quotations are from the ample collection in Beltramelli, *L'Uomo Nuovo*. 4th edition.

" gas and water Socialism." He cursed the Government for not giving municipal improvement ; he cursed the Socialist Party for asking nothing more, even of the proletariat. This was not enough. He wanted libraries ; he begged for ideals ; a new society, a new civilisation. Almost in Nietzsche's words, he said : " The bridge between man as animal and man as a human, the bridge between pre-history and history, the bridge which will lead humanity from the struggle for life, to an agreement for the sake of life, will be built." But the official party was a corpse ! and Parliament full of cretins, humbugs and ignor- amuses. Socialism was a living, pulsating, war-making activity,

" harsh, bitter, composed of contrasts and violences ; a war, and, in a war, woe to the pitying ! A terrible thing, serious and sublime. Only at this price can it be realised, and not become a land of delight for politicians and the weak. It is not a business affair, not a game of politics, not a dream of romantics, and much less is it a sport ; it is an effort of moral and material elevation, individual and collective."

He now began to speak wildly, like a prophet of Biblical times, giving strange answers to his critics.

" We feel strong because we feel pure. We feel strong because we have no friends and we tend to restrict our acquaintance rather than enlarge it. We do not ask for popularity, nor clients, nor votes. We dare to speak the truth brutally in the face of those who follow us."

And again,

" We prefer quality to quantity. To the obedient and resigned flock which follows the shepherd and runs away at the first howl of the wolves, we prefer a little resolute audacious nucleus, which has given a basis to its own faith, knows what it wants, and marches directly to its end. Italy must renew itself, or die."

On the death of Andrea Costa, the inspirer of his father, Mussolini took the opportunity of comparing the pioneer with the present generation of Socialist politicians. Costa's life ought to be their example. Let them try to understand it, and kneel before it ! " Of Andrea Costa there remains something more than a handful of white cinders : the Memory ! The Idea remains with us, and the idea does not die with the passing of man : it is divine and immortal ! Hence we must purify ourselves, and act ! " He spoke

in this way, partly because it was in his own nature, partly because the Italian people like to be spoken to in this style, and partly because his Socialist antagonists did not economise in the manufacture and output of invective.

Mussolini's utterances were being quoted in the *Avanti*, the national newspaper. Then, at the Congress of Milan in October 1910, he made a special mark by his intransigent onslaught on the policy of collaboration between the Socialist Party and the democratic parties of the Left. He urged the Party to "live dangerously." In the Romagna, overwhelmingly Republican, he was fighting desperately to distinguish the Socialist doctrine from theirs, to spread that doctrine, and make followers. This Congress was his first personal conflict with Bissolati and Bonomi. His reception was mixed, and apart from bringing him into the public eye, his intervention was of little immediate worth, since speeches of this kind had often been made before and, though receiving applause, had had no great effect. Only a small minority thought that his views were a policy suitable for the long run ; but, of course, there were always people ready to strike and do violence in the *piazza* on special occasions if this were thought effective. The leaders denied both the morality and the utility of a set policy of class war conducted by insurrectionary methods. Since his Fascist campaign from 1919–1922, Mussolini has returned to the doctrine of class collaboration then defended by the leaders he vilified and afterwards overthrew. Until the War the policy of force, whether it was the storming point of high ideals or only of economic demands, was held in check, though not entirely and not without difficulty.

Mussolini returned to the strenuous polemics of Forlì. It is difficult to convey to English readers a real sense of the asperity and heat of Italian politics. The agricultural population was divided into three almost murderous factions: day-labourers, *mezzadria* (those who worked for others for a share of the produce), and small and large owners. Vituperation was common to all. From its rich store-house the Republican newspaper applied the following to Mussolini : " Vulgar ; indecent ; livid ; nauseating ; insensate ; a vagabond in the pay of Jewish societies ; pretentious ; conscienceless ; paranoic ; an exalted who madly abandoned himself to the obscene dance of provocations ; in the

pay of the police ; a stupid figure ; a ferocious madman : a self-styled Socialist ; a rancorous inciter ; an unscrupulous liar ; a most vile and delinquent sower of hatred ; a trickster ; a hack-writer hardly worth the contempt of gentlemen ; a maniac ; a criminally lunatic liar ; an imbecile ; a cretin ; and, to boot, a disgusting reptile." There were scuffles, insults, and petty violence on all sides, with an occasional murder. Mussolini thought there was nothing really serious in it at all. " It is mediæval particularism, exaggerated love of your own parish, violence of words more than facts."

A critical time now arrived for Mussolini and the middle-class intellectuals, Turati and Treves, who led the Socialist Party. In September 1911, Giolitti undertook his colonial adventure, the Libyan war. This was the culmination of a long series of efforts on the part of the Italian Government to secure concessions from the Turkish Government, then the ruler of Cyrenaica and Tripolitana, areas in which Italian immigrants were numerous. It was feared that these areas might be claimed by France, who had obtained Tunisia under the very nose of a thwarted Italy, or by Germany, seeking for compensation. This raised an extremely serious crisis of conscience, for Socialists especially. Italy was an overpopulated country, and even her annual emigration, though very large, gave little relief, especially to the South which most needed it. Emigration also raised the problem (for nationalists) of the loss of nationals to foreign countries. How would the issues involved square with Socialist objections to the exploitation of backward peoples, militarism, and war ? In fact, a large number of Socialist intellectuals had come to accept the view that poor countries had the right to fight the rich for a distribution of the world's wealth, even as the proletariat had the right and duty to fight the capitalists. When the war for Tripolitana broke out many Socialists supported it, among them Bonomi and Bissolati. Turati and Treves, the latter then the editor of the *Avanti*, led the orthodox Socialist opposition against the war, and had committees of protest set up all over the country. Mussolini was not an opponent of all wars, but of this particular war. Socialists and Republicans were united. A strike was engineered. Barricades were put up. For two days there were turbulence, cavalry charges, and many

casualties. Mussolini proceeded from argument to violent harangues, and thence to incitements to open resistance to the Government. When the cavalry charged, the crowd left him in the *piazza*. He was arrested and accused of :

" Resistance to the public authority and personal injuries to public officers ; infringement of the freedom of the men called to arms, and resistance to authority and personal injuries to public officers ; violent stoppage of industrial work and establishments with the consequent cessation of labour and the industries ; violent stoppage of the tramways of the Romagna Lines, and the over-turning of goods wagons, and damage to railway lines ; damage to the State telegraph line by throwing down the poles and cutting wires ; violent compulsion to stop the running of a railway engine ; placing of a telegraph pole on the railway line with danger of an accident to the express train."

Condemned to five years imprisonment, he appealed, and actually served only five months. This seems to have contributed to dull any conscientious objections to apply similar measures to his opponents. Nor did the whole episode make kinder his judgement of his fellow-beings, whose representatives at Forlì, indeed, disliked him, and, though listening to his incitements to start a general strike, ran away. The obvious thing was to expect little of cowards, and to hope a great deal to have the cavalry under his own command. Yet the evidence given by de Ambris[1] seems to show that Mussolini himself had a fit of nerves when the action was commenced against him. He tried to put the blame on his fellow culprits and the crowd, and suspected his counsel.

Now it is important to notice the spirit of Mussolini's defence in the action against him. He argued that he was giving an historical, geographical and illustrative lecture.

" I said that between us Socialists and the Nationalists there is this difference : they want a *vast* Italy, but I want an Italy, cultured rich and free. . . . Thus I took my ground on the love of country. . . . If you condemn me you will do me an honour, because you are in the presence not of a malefactor, but an assertor of ideas, an agitator of consciences, of a fighter for a faith which imposes itself on your

[1] *Op cit.*, pp. 15 and 16. Cf. also Bonavita (Mussolini's barrister), *Mussolini Svelato*, pp. 131 ff.

respect because it holds in itself the presentiments of the future and the great force of a truth ! "

This episode, with its quasi-martyrdom, did Mussolini a great political service. But he has since abandoned his own view of national progress and accepted the Nationalists !

A National Figure. At the Congress of Reggio Emilia, in 1912, Mussolini, now a national figure, was revenged on Bonomi and Bissolati, for on his motion they were expelled from the Party for collaborating with the bourgeoisie during the Libyan War, and for congratulating the King on his escape from a recent attempt at assassination. By sheer abandonment to violence, without calculating the consequences to his Party and the nation, Mussolini had cleared two competitors out of his way. *It is difficult to overemphasise the part which personal differences, arising out of ambition for power, have played in Mussolini's career.* He had also advanced into the highest councils of the Party, and, in December 1912, he was made editor of the Party newspaper, the *Avanti.*

His power was growing daily. The newspaper was directed, as he wanted to direct it, with the minimum of interference from his colleagues on the party directorate (but with much help from Angela Balabanoff)[1], and late in 1913 he even sought to lead the Syndicalists in a battle against official Socialism in it. At a later Congress, at Ancona, he began his campaign against Freemasonry, and secured the passage of a resolution declaring its incompatibility with Socialism. The official historians assert that the exploitation of the Italian Parliament by the Freemason bourgeoisie made him their implacable foe. Others say that Mussolini was revenged because he had applied for acceptance as a Freemason and had been refused for reasons derogatory to his reputation.

The revolutionary spirit returned to the *Avanti.* " We firmly believe that, in the *piazza,* and not elsewhere, will the decisive battles be fought, when the men and the times are ripe." Although he execrated the Socialism of municipal improvements, when the Government proceeded to the repression of those who rioted or went on strike to secure them he thundered that they

[1] Cf. Balabanoff. *Wesen und Werdegang des Italientschen Fascismus.* (Vienna, 1931.)

were necessary. In the light of what has happened since, some of his utterances have an interest for us. In January 1913, the *carabinieri*, dispersing the riotous crowd at Rocca Gorga in the Province of Rome, wounded and killed several people. They had protested against the loss of rights to common land. Defending the rioters, Mussolini said :

" Certainly for all those who have an idyllic, arcadian, pacifist conception of Socialism, for all those who believe in the inviolability of human life (for us life is not the only good, it is not an end in itself, but a means—Sandor Petŏfi sang : ' Life is dear to me, love even more, but I would give both for liberty.'—Whoever attributes an absolute value to the life of man condemns the world to immobility) . . . for all these Socialists, endowed with the old Christian feelings, a cry like ours must seem blasphemy. . . . Our action may seem to superficial onlookers to be negative, but has its great efficacy in this that it forces the Government to provide. If it will not or cannot, so much the worse for it."

Mussolini was charged with incitement to violence. Defending himself, he said that if such tragedies occurred again, when the conservative classes shot down their own Italian countrymen, who were so miserable that they must make the elementary demands they did, he would write not with ink, but with his blood. He would do what he had done again.

" *Imagine an Italy in which 36 millions should all think the same, as though their brains were made in an identical mould, and you would have a madhouse, or rather, a kingdom of utter boredom or imbecility.*"

His bitterness against the intellectuals increased. The attitude was not only true to his character, but to bespatter the intellectuals with abuse and to vaunt oneself an *authentic workman* impressed working-class crowds. Mussolini inherited this instrument of debate and advancement from the intellectuals of the Party themselves.

Already in 1912, Sorel predicted his rise to the leadership of Italy :

" Our Mussolini is not an ordinary Socialist. Believe me, you will one day perhaps see him at the head of a sacred battalion, saluting the flag of Italy with his sword. He is an Italian of the fifteenth century, a *condottiere*. No one yet knows it ; but he is the only man of energy capable of repairing the weakness of the Government."

We have come almost to the eve of the world's great catastrophe, without which Mussolini might have been doomed to wear out his revolutionary ardour in fighting his Socialist rivals and his bourgeois enemies for a parliamentary majority. But before the old world was ruined, and the ferocities beneficial to him were unleashed, two great opportunities occurred to whip up the workers of Italy to a frenzy. In 1913 there were serious strikes at Turin, Ferrara, and Milan. In June 1914 occurred the "Red Week," when riots, which began at Ancona as an answer to the prohibition of an anti-militarist meeting, turned into a general strike which spread throughout Romagna and the Marches and then to all the great cities. There was considerable violence, fomented by the anarchist Malatesta and Mussolini. We have already noticed the passages from the *Avanti* quoted by Pareto to show the revolutionary impetuosity of the paper. For days the towns were in the hands of the people, the troops besieged in their barracks, people needed Socialist or Republican passports to be allowed to pass through the streets. It was expected that the Republic would be proclaimed in Rome ; the middle classes hid for fear of violence. Mussolini believed that the Revolution had come. Yet Mussolini did not go into the *piazza* to lead the insurrection. After a week, however, the Reformist wing called a truce. Finally, strangely enough in the light of future history, the movement was put down by the Nationalist Party, led by Corradini, Federzoni and Rocco, Mussolini's future mentors and collaborators.

III

Personality

The War was a godsend to him, and he afterwards recognised it as such ; but it took considerable persuasion by friends and some months of private meditation before he became a warrior. We said at the outset that the life of Mussolini was a life of turbulent and violent movement towards Power. Now, by making the War his own, he possessed himself of the Italian people.

The tenor of his life so far had revealed only his uncompromising revulsion from bourgeois civilisation, the violent will to overturn it at any cost, and a large but vague sympathy for

the workers and peasants. He had attained Nietzschean destructiveness, and learnt that energetic minorities—élites—make history.

However, if this were all, he would have been little different from others who had made their way to the front rank of the Socialist Party. There was in him, not yet fully developed but ready to be formed and evoked by events and emergencies, the additional dimension which lies between talent and genius, between mere respectability and greatness. It was composed of an intensity of feeling, a subtlety of apprehension, a plasticity of the responding course and tactics of action. In addition, there was a resolute rejection of common scruples, and considerable courage. He was eloquent, with considerable histrionic gifts. Of principal importance, however, was the force of his will and his readiness to take action. He believed it rested with him whether ideals could be realised, and that what he believed to be true would become true if he wished it enough to take the appropriate action. As his friend, the political philosopher Sergio Panunzio, says,[1] "In fact, the crisis of Socialism, arrived at its most acute phase towards 1910, . . . found in the mind and work of Mussolini the man of affirmations and final and supreme decisions. The revision of Marxism, the movement of thought, criticism and philosophy, a kind of neo-Kantianism, is also in Mussolini, the critic and thinker, but in Mussolini it becomes passion, impulse, will and spiritual agitation."

There was the physical appearance, a fine, massive, compact head; features well chiselled, but not sharp; a strong pouting wilful mouth; a sculptured jaw, heavy, forward built, but clear cut; a *clever* forehead, with a promise of gentleness in its moulding. It is a hammer-head; the edges do not cut, but the head has mass, and can hit hard. The whole face is as expressive as an Italian actor's, and there are those who say that this actor's expression is matched by an internal histrionism and a suggestibility to environment which can cause him to forget his conscience and act merely to impress and secure applause, a quality which is useful to success but pernicious to a nation. But the eyes are the special feature:

[1] *La Storia del Sindacalismo Fascista* (Nov. 1933), p. 16.

large, almost black, lurking far back in a waiting obscurity, learning, storing-up, and brooding, until, at the signal, they literally spring out on their victims, person, crowd, or idea. They open, dilate, and *blaze*.

The body is of the short athletic type, shorter than I expected to see, but nevertheless a presence. There is something very ready about it. The most delicate signal will send it swiftly to its precise mark. The impression is not a cold, intellectual, impression; it has an emotional moving quality. There is something altogether tigerlike about him. With dark, tawny, complexion, and dark purposes, and lithe movement, he goes on his confident way, and the instant the smallest twig gives an unwonted snap, the muscles and sinews are released for the inevitably successful spring. The War gave Mussolini his opportunity to apply these unique qualities to "constructive" government. They were still in the making, yet to be developed and tempered by moving events. The rising Fury was in time to overthrow the Parliamentary system described in the next chapter.

Chapter III

THE ITALIAN PARLIAMENTARY SYSTEM, 1870–1922

It is a serious mistake to imagine that the Parliamentary system of Italy from 1870 to 1922 was the same in character as English or American representative government. Fascism is not the fruit of the weaknesses of "parliamentarism," but of the Italian miscreation, misunderstanding, and mismanagement of it. Other countries have their difficulties; but they are peculiarly their own, and the remedies for them do not seem to be a Fascist system in the Italian manner. One man's meat is another man's poison. Indeed, when I spoke with Mussolini, we arrived at the conclusion that every country has its own special way to heaven because it has its own special home on earth. He was willing to concede that England's salvation did not lie in Fascism, if I were prepared to concede at least that the English system would not suit Italy. Sufficient unto the country is the evil thereof, and hands off! all round, are not unwise maxims in governmental innovation. Mussolini himself has declared that Fascism is not an article of export[1]; but, on other occasions, for local consumption, he speaks (in a very confused language be it noted) as though the whole world could do with a strong dose. "To-day I affirm that Fascism as an idea, a doctrine, and realisation, is universal: Italian in its particular institutions, it is universal in its spirit. . . . One can therefore foresee a Fascist Europe, a Europe which is inspired by Fascist institutions, the doctrines and the practice of Fascism."[2]

Consideration of the Italian political system before and just after the War, demonstrates that Fascism was an answer to conditions peculiar to Italy. It is a toss-up whether the Italian

[1] Chamber of Deputies, March 3rd, 1928.

[2] October 27th, 1930. On October 25th, 1932, he affirmed: "In ten years Europe will be Fascist or Fascistised."

people after the War lost their heads or whether they had any heads to lose. But they certainly received no assistance, material or moral, from their parliamentary Government. The general opinion as expressed by observers of *all parties*, but especially by the Fascist fighting squads, was that the laws and the men had lost their authority, and deservedly so because of their utter incompetence.[1] This is what Italo Balbo, then a young student of twenty said[2]:

"The present system is breaking down. Nothing remains but a collection of decrepit statesmen who communicate their paralysis to Parliament and all the organs of the State. . . . At one time all parties were concentrated on the cataclysms of Montecitorio. Now only some hundreds of professional politicians occupy themselves with parliamentary crises."

The Constitution of United Italy was the constitution which Charles Albert of Savoy had granted in 1848. It was not a constitution, be it noted, formulated by a constituent assembly founded upon popular election after a popular revolution.[3] It was a monarchy with an elected Parliament and a responsible Cabinet, and it had been granted to the people of Piedmont as a means of securing the aid of the liberal and active political elements in Italy for the King's struggle to cast Austria out of the Italian peninsula. The constitution had been applied to Italy piecemeal: first in Piedmont, its home, and then by a combination of victories over the Austrians in the North and Centre, and the Bourbons in South Italy, followed by annexation of, and popular votes in, the liberated States. The *Statuto* established a political system roughly corresponding to the English Constitution. It included the sovereignty of the King in Parliament, and Ministers appointed by the King who were in law and in fact responsible to the elected Chamber of Deputies. The Chamber of Deputies had the power to make laws and control the Executive. There was a Senate composed of

[1] The memoirs of Giolitti, Salandra, Bonomi, Don Sturzo, Ferrero, give us the right to make this assertion.

[2] Balbo, *Diario di* 1922, pp. 28, 29.

[3] Lowell, *Governments and Parties in Continental Europe*, Vol. I., gives a simple account of its formation.

members appointed for life, with powers equal to those of the popular assembly except that it had no initiative in money bills.

Such a system always depends for its character and efficiency on the political parties which organise the electorate, and compose and control the Ministers. It may mean the powerlessness of the King or the President, as in France, where Parliament is composed of a succession of well-founded majority parties faced by one or more parties making the Opposition. But in Italy the King had a far larger power in the formation of Governments than in the English political system, because there were never majority parties in the House upon whom the choice to form a Cabinet had indubitably to fall.

The King, therefore, had considerable latitude in choosing the potential Prime Minister whom he would entrust with founding a Government. He could, and sometimes did, call upon men who had no visible means of support, and who might collect a majority once they faced the Chamber of Deputies. The King was therefore a factor to be counted with, for with a part in the making of ministries there inevitably goes an influence in policy. This partly accounts for an anti-monarchical movement (furiously supported by Mussolini, as by almost all Socialists); hence also the importance of the King in the crucial days of October 27th–29th, 1922.

No Parliamentarism. Italy from 1870 to 1922 had a Parliament but no parliamentarism. The Italian governmental system was lacking in the fundamental requisites for permanent success. A government must have a clear policy; if a government does not know what it wants, how can it hope to win anybody's loyalty? Secondly, a government needs the vigour and the length of life necessary to convert its policy into laws and their successful administration. In default of this even the original followers become contemptuous of it; and nothing is worse for it, or for a people, than unfulfilled promises. Thirdly, a government must possess dignity and attractiveness. In an opera-loving, colour-loving, passionate people, the gestures of the government must appeal to the senses. It must seem to be doing heroic and dramatic deeds, and this especially, in the case of the Italian people, who had until

recently been moved by the exploits of Mazzini, the brothers Bandiera, Garibaldi and the Thousand, Manin in the defence of Venice, and later excited by the propaganda of Bakunin and the early internationalists and anarchists. Governments must not let their citizens get bored, especially in our own day, when the people have been weaned away from individual adventure, to become, in their present condition and hope of immortality, mere fractions of an almighty State. We ought not to forget Disraeli's dictum, " Mormon has more votaries than Bentham ! " Fourthly, a government must not have suicidal tendencies. The nemesis of liberal governments is that they bind their hands with ethical shackles, while their opponents praise their generosity only to prepare to overthrow them by violence. The force of a government which believes it has the right to exist, is bound to be in reciprocal proportion to the force which seeks to overthrow it.

Fifthly and finally, a government must intimately associate the people with itself. It must form permanent continuous connections with the people, regard itself as belonging to them, and teach them that the citizens are principals who cannot be absolved from a permanent interest in these their own affairs. They have to convince the people that administration may be entrusted to agents, but that concern and responsibility are inalienable. When a people regards itself as but remotely concerned with public affairs, the way is open for all sorts of usurpation.

These conditions are extremely difficult to fulfil, and Italy was far from fulfilling them. We shall see whether the fault was remediable or not. The superficial fault consisted in the absence of well-organised political parties, the essential mechanism of a free government. Parliament was broken up into about ten groups, not counting "independents" and marginal grouplets. Only the Socialist Party was well articulated throughout the country ; and even that had no real hold in the South. The rest had little stability, in the sense of possessing a network of local committees, centring in national headquarters or conventions, or personal leadership, or policy, or steadfast parliamentary friends. Discipline within the groups was unreliable ; and therefore coalition governments crumbled and conceded from

the very day of their formation—indeed, on the day *before* their formation. Supremacy, therefore, was bound to pass to men sufficiently cunning and unenthusiastic to hold disguised enemies together. Such a man was Giovanni Giolitti. The offspring of a petty middle-class professional family, he was trained as a lawyer, served his apprenticeship as a civil servant and confidential agent to Ministers when in special difficulties, and later entered the career of politician on his own behalf, becoming in time, as the Italians called him, " half an institution." He was Prime Minister from 1903 to 1905, 1906 to 1907 and 1911 to 1914 (and again at the end of 1920), and even in the intervals the life of Parliament still revolved round him. When problems and passions became abnormally difficult, from 1914 onwards the personal pivot and system broke like a rotten reed.

Why was the Italian Parliament split into so many unreliable fragments? The answer takes us deep into the nature of the Italian nation, that agglomeration of human beings of which the State, the supreme organising association, is only the last, and hardly more than the external, expression.

Disunited Italy. It should never be forgotten that United Italy, that is all Italy as a single political system, was extremely new—counting back from the date of the Great War its history spanned only about 50 years. When we compare the long continuous evolution of England, France and Prussia with the fifty years since the little pieces of Italy had been laboriously, and somewhat uncertainly, stitched together into a united parliamentary system, the wonder is not that this collapsed so soon, but that it lasted so long. Here was no national policy confirmed by long tradition and become indisputably common to all; here was as yet no constitution sunk *within* men. Here were no steady continuous states of mind, broad and deep enough to offer foundations to nation-wide political parties. Here was no ready trust in the benevolence of the State, or a sense that the State was only another aspect, a projection, of the citizens.

On the contrary, the citizens, as citizens of separate States, had been trained to violent antagonism to their Governments, which were foreign, Austria in Lombardy and Venetia,

Austrian archdukes in Parma, Modena and Tuscany, Bourbons in Naples and Sicily, the Pope in Romagna and the Marches. Their purpose had been not to preserve and improve, but to overthrow. Very special efforts were needed to win their confidence and co-operation in the new State. Unfortunately for the Italians, there was not only no magnetic attraction about the new Parliament and the new politics, but, as we shall show more particularly below, good cause for its repudiation.

The Absentee Masses. Experience of the franchise, one of the most potent means of winning citizens to loyalty and training them to an interest and understanding of the State, was short. Universal suffrage did not come until 1913. It is significant that when it did come it came to a people who in their first use of it were forced to complain that the Government had violated the law by chicanery and gross corruption; while on the other hand the Government could retort that the electors themselves had been bribable and riotous. In 1870, literacy and property qualifications limited the vote to only $2\frac{1}{2}$ per cent of the people; in 1882, relaxations (not of literacy) had increased this to about 7 per cent. The electorate in England at about the same time was much larger; it was about 9 per cent of the population, and in 1884 was raised to about 14 per cent. But *until 1913* the Italian electorate remained only less than 9 per cent of the population; then it rose to 16 per cent before the War. What was more serious was the abstention from voting. The highest vote ever recorded until 1904 was 60 per cent of those entitled to vote; the usual vote was 3 or 4 per cent less than this. In England, the percentage of voters was about 80 per cent. While about one and a half million were voting in Italy, the English voters actually numbered about six million. Many did not vote in obedience to the Papal decree forbidding both candidatures and electors. In the North, which was becoming the stronghold of Socialism, many Catholics ignored the prohibition, since they could not leave their property at the mercy of Socialists.

However, Catholicism is not the only answer to the problem: the peasantry, which composed over 60 per cent of the population,

and the recent town-dwellers, had not the faintest idea what politics and voting meant. To them one government was as good as another; elections meant either being bribed to vote or being threatened to stay away. Nor were the parties yet organised to rouse the masses and educate them. Even in the crucial elections of May 1921, which returned the Parliament to settle the Fascist problem, only about 57 per cent of those on the register voted.

But the comprehensiveness of the franchise is not the sole factor which is State-building; just as important is the length of time over which the people have participated in elections. That sense of balance between "them" and "me," which is the essence of the national community, is compounded of a large number of inconsiderable trifles of this sort. At each election there is a small deposit of the wisdom that comes from experience. Lies and exaggerations are uncovered; parties experience the swing of the pendulum; pressure from below as well as the message of successive elections teach them to collaborate; followers and leaders find a fellowship in common principles and phrases which enter into general circulation; a sense of the inevitability and desirability of give-and-take, compromise and sympathy, develops. In England this process has gone on continuously at least since 1832; in Italy only since 1870. And even in that period Italy was terribly disturbed by general strikes, local affrays, violent risings and bloody repressions. Normal political life was not only short, but violent and always on trial.

Another serious obstacle to healthy political development and the formation of a national consciousness was the widespread illiteracy, only seriously reduced in recent years. In 1871, 69 per cent of all over the age of six could not read or write. In 1901, the number was still 48 per cent; and in 1931 it was still about 21 per cent. In the South it was well over 80 per cent in 1871, and it is still over 40 per cent. We do not maintain that anybody who can read can think, and still less understand politics. But the inability to read deprives the voter of the opportunity of quiet dissection of news and arguments, and reflection in his own good time. It delivers him up to rhetorical exaggeration and distortion.

Lack of a Governing Class. Now the continuous and peaceful progress of a nation's life hinges upon its possession of a deeply-rooted governing class. By this I mean a body of people who do not differ so fundamentally among themselves that they cannot be tolerant of all but the final differences regarding the aim of the State ; who regard the welfare of the whole country as an object superior to their own initial egotism and the special interests of any class, group or individual ; who, finally, make the necessary sacrifices of preparation for and devotion to public affairs ultimately for the benefit of the public weal. In the sweep of history the personal composition and the social and economic character of this class, of course, changes. Whether it changes by the gradual inclusion of new elements or by violent substitution, the vital thing is its possession, and its transmission of, the sense of devotion to the public welfare, *and popular confidence in it.* Britain has long enjoyed the existence of such a class, and so has Germany. Their members may have taken emoluments, privileges and dignities as their share of the spoils of office, and may even have bequeathed these to a posterity unworthy of them. Yet their merit is that they fulfilled a function and bequeathed a tradition essential to the harmonious and energetic life of a nation. Such a governing class Italy was unfortunate not yet to possess.

Italy had no homogeneous aristocracy with family ramifications running over the whole of the country. She had only a number of separate aristocracies whose seat of influence and distinction had hitherto been in the several kingdoms and principalities which made up the new nation. They had a local field of activity only, outside the Royal Court ; there was no central, nationally active and prestige-giving institution like the British House of Lords, of which they were natural members ; and the Senate of the new Kingdom admitted only a few nominated for at any rate the appearance of achievement. Hence, one possible national integument was lacking.

Italy possessed no large class of rich people. There were as yet only a small number of big industrialists, bankers and men of commerce, and a few large owners of agricultural estates, mainly in the South. The industrialists and financiers were not yet in a position to make their business a side-line, with politics as their

chief occupation, as in nineteenth-century England. They were still only in the first or second generation of their rise, and their interest in politics was to use the politicians as agents to secure for them (or to secure them against) tariffs and subsidies, with the support of which they could proceed to create at a very good pace the industries of the North—metals and machinery, cotton manufactures, silk, a mercantile marine—and conduct the imports of raw materials and fuel and the export of agricultural and manufactured products. Hydro-electric plant, tramways, and railways were built and extended regularly from 1890 onwards. There was a rapid extension of banking and commerce. The government and parliament were also needed to maintain social order against the threatening Socialists, trade unionists and syndicalists, more especially as a very large proportion of the capital needed was foreign.

There was no Italian equivalent of Tory Democracy in England. This seems to be due to two causes. As industry and its accompanying conditions were new, there was still mutual suspicion and fear; workers and employers only guessed the worst that the other might do. So the former looked to strikes, and the latter looked to the *carabinieri* and the Army. Secondly, the English, owing to their peculiar religious history, have a well-developed spirit of secular philanthropy, while the charitable Italian gave, not to the State or the municipality or to his workmen, but to the Church. Hence the industrial rich had the reputation of selfishness. Nothing is more denounced in Fascist pre-history (but not since) than the use made of parliament by the captains of industry under Giolitti. It was not in the direction of the rich bankers and industrialists that Italy could look for its governing class, or for a wholesome constituent of it.

There were comparatively few great agricultural owners compared with a country like Prussia or the England of before about 1890. Italy was, and still is, rather a land of peasant proprietors and small tenants. In 1931, there were about three million owners cultivating their own land, and nearly a million tenants. In England, there are less than half a million owners. The very large owners were in the South, and, as we have already explained, had no sense of obligation to their labourers.

For the Southern owners the government was simply a prize-fighter. Hence the misery of Sicily, and the rise of the Sicilian *fasci*.

The various groups of the rich had no political ideals in common, except the repression of the lower middle class and the proletariat in agriculture and industry. Industry and finance were concentrated North of Naples, the *latifundia* in the South. All the improvements required in the South, local government, credits for co-operative societies, roads, public health, education, water, railways, would cost the North money, since it was the richer. And yet, in fact, owing to the tangle of the taxes, the out-of-date land valuation, the customs tariffs, the higher incidence of the taxes on consumption, the South was too heavily burdened. It had no interest in the policy of industrial tariffs and subsidies of the rich men of the North, and the bankers always seemed to be exploiting their need for credit. Nor was the North pleased with the pressure of the South for a colonial policy which might provide an outlet for its emigrants. From 1876 to 1900 over 200,000 people were leaving Italy per year, the majority from the North; but between 1900–13 about 625,000 per year were emigrating, of which nearly 50 per cent were from the South, 15 per cent from Central Italy, and 35 per cent from North Italy, and this on a population about one-half that of the North and Centre, a clear sign of the prevailing poverty and misery of the South.

The Middle Class. If the aristocracy, the rich captains of industry, and wealthy agriculturists did not as yet severally form or help to constitute a governing class, was the petty middle class in any better case? These formed a large proportion of the populace.[1] Even in 1931 independent artisans represented 4·4 per cent; independent commerce, 5 per cent; and independent agriculture, 31 per cent of the occupied populace. These had limited interests and limited views. They were precisely the groups to forget the nation in concentrating all their efforts on their city, and Italy, it has more than once been remarked, is a collection of municipalities. They had not yet been educated to national problems. It is said that they were the opponents of

[1] Cf. The brilliant story by Quilici, *Origini Sviluppo e Insufficienza della Borghesia Italiana*, 1932.

men like Crispi, who wanted to lead them on incomprehensible foreign adventures, for which they would be made to pay. Their interest was to get on in their own walk of life, which meant keeping down expenses, especially public expenses. They were exclusively profit-makers, and therefore changed their allegiance from election to election according to the immediate advantages promised.

The Family in Italy. Their interest in the world was exhausted, in a degree which it is difficult for an Englishman to understand, with the career of their relations, with family obligations, problems, successes, affections, and hatreds. They yearned for a snug life, secured by savings invested in Government securities. The great reformers, such as Christ and Plato, have always been dismayed by the obstructiveness of the family group in the reform of State and civilisation ; in Italy the family absorbs a remarkably large part of the thought and energies of its members. It is this, allied to the materialism of small people striving to " get on," that formed the object of Socialist (not working class) contempt, and of Mussolini's provincial philippics. Yet something remains to be said of still another branch of the bourgeoisie, the teachers, lawyers, the middle ranges of the civil service, the publicists, the sons of the middle class. They became the leaders and the advance guard of the Socialist Party and the Trade Unions. When the first generation has provided a living and an education, and has shown at home all the god-forsaken meanness of an acquisitive and forbidding middle-class existence, the younger generation strikes out along idealist paths to re-fashion the stuffy world. The idealistic party was, until about 1908, the Socialist Party, after when the adventurous turned to the Nationalists.

The Peasant Population. In 1911 the agriculturally *occupied* population numbered some nine million. Of these 50 per cent were day-labourers, the natural clients of Socialism. Small proprietors, who for some part of the year were paid labourers, accounted for 19 per cent, and were well-disposed towards the Socialists. The middle type, the *mezzadri*, forming 18 per cent, were Liberal and not Socialist, since their interests were bound

up with the big owners and they were often employers of day labour. Thus a considerable proportion of the nation was susceptible to the call of the Socialist Party. To them, however, Socialism meant not a pattern of social duties and rights, but a direct promise of certain individual material advantages. This is splendid material for passivity under a dictatorship offering to safeguard property. In addition the small landowners divided their allegiance between the Socialists, the Republicans, and the candidates supported by the clergy and the Catholic Co-operative Societies. Further analysis is necessary. The day-labourers were divided between Socialists and Catholics. The *mezzadri* were, on the one side, at odds with the day-labourers, and therefore not Socialist but Republican, Catholic or Liberal, and on the other, at odds with the big landowners who hired their labour by special contracts, and therefore in some places were inclined to Socialism. The bigger landowners and tenants were Liberals, Democrats or Conservatives. Every group had its own interests to cultivate. They looked to immediate changes in taxation, or salaries, or rents—each to keep at least what he already had, or extort from the other something extra. Even their associations, and producers' consumers' credit and co-operative societies, were divided strictly among Socialists, Republicans and Catholics. The larger landowners faced the Agricultural Labourers Leagues with Agrarian Leagues.

Thus the Italian world of manufacture, commerce and agriculture was divided into great primary sections, and within these, into groups with rival and selfish interests. To make a steady energetic government out of the fragments was possible, if at all, only if the process of parliamentary co-operation were carried on with genuine intent to arrive at agreement, and if the period allowed for the process were long and uninterrupted.

The Socialist Movement. What of the Socialist movement as providing the potential governing class? It possessed brains, organisers, energy, a widespread organisation, a faith which transcended, although it did not totally deny, immediate individual rewards, and a large and growing membership. Why, then, was it that Italy did not steadily evolve into a Socialist

State, which might yet have been a true democracy in that it would conciliate the demands and tolerate the right of a fairly large number of dissenters to protest and oppose? The twofold answer lies in the personal composition of the party, and the effects of the Great War. Italian Socialism began with Bakunin, who preached class-war and revolutionary tactics.[1] In many this was combined and confused with Mazzinian nationalist idealism and Garibaldian insurgency. The internationalism of their membership of the International was, apart from an occasional thrill, little more than nominal. Over this was constructed a layer of Socialist gradualism, by Claudio Treves, Filippo Turati, and later Ivanoe Bonomi and Leonida Bissolati, all middle-class intellectuals, either lawyers or publicists, and certainly far removed in mentality and experience from the "authentic workman." They advocated reformed Marxism, that is the demand for a new world, but without a *war* of classes. This implied collaboration with the parties of the Extreme Left in and outside Parliament in order to obtain those elementary constitutional rights which other countries had already won decades ago, an essential preliminary to Socialist development. They advocated the conquest of the municipalities where the first instalments of Socialism might be realised, and the encouragement and management of co-operative societies, trade unions, local clubs, mutual benefit societies, adult education. Such gradualism the reformists considered unavoidable if the development of a Socialist State were to be sound. For they argued that the Italian worker and agricultural labourer were too immature politically to do other than defeat their own ends if they suddenly acquired power by violence or a majority vote in Parliament.

From the beginning in 1892, when Turati founded the Italian Socialist Party, the two tendencies, collaboration in the capitalist State and its violent denial, were, to put it mildly, in difficult alliance. Every year or so a new revolutionary leader surged up, and challenged the peaceful methods of the established leaders. And it was difficult for the party to combine stability and movement. Between 1893 and 1902 it was fighting for its very existence

[1] Cf. Michels, *Storia Critica del Movimento Socialista Italiano*, 1926. The book was finished in 1921. It mentions Mussolini but once, without comment of any kind.

against a campaign of repression the like of which has not been conceivable in England since the days of the Six Acts. We have already given some particulars of this in sketching the life of Mussolini.

Even to sing the Hymn of the Workers, composed by Turati, was (as it has once again become) a criminal offence. But by 1902 the elementary liberties had been gained. Giolitti had become Prime Minister, and substituted the tactics of mild social reforms and credits to co-operative societies and public works and neutrality in industrial disputes, for strike-breaking by soldiers, tactics designed to win over the reformist elements of the Socialists and the better-off workers in the protected and subsidised industries. In 1900, 33 Socialists were elected to Parliament. That was the blissful heyday of the older Socialists, for in winning their battle they had won the loyalty of Italian youth, who gratefully flocked into the party. But they also won latitude for their own extremists, such as Mussolini.

The older generation of leaders held the organisation in their hands until 1912, when Mussolini had to be let into the citadel, but only with tremendous difficulty. Meanwhile events were occurring and ideas were in ferment which conspired in the end to turn over the whole nation to Mussolini.

The Class War. The participation of the Italian masses in politics began in an era keenly conscious of class divisions. Italy had no century-old political parties of which rising interests could become the extreme wing, and so become domesticated, while giving their hosts an education in the new realities. Such a process happened in England in the relationship between the Liberal and the nascent Labour Party. But in Italy the Socialist Party was for long an outlaw; there was always a spur to its violent members. Further, the first impulse of Italian socialism had not come, as in England, from well-meaning benevolent reformers like Robert Owen, Hodgskin, Lovett and others, but from anarchists, nihilists, and disciples of Karl Marx, often foreigners or returned exiles. It was never possible to still the early voices of revolution, since Italy was industrially and agriculturally in a process of rapid transformation from the 80's onward, and industrial disputes came

thick and fast. In 1879 there were 32 strikes involving 25,000 strikers ; in 1889, 126 and 125,000 strikers ; in 1899, 259 strikes and 259,000 strikers. If we consider the disturbed elections, the strikes, the domestic riots, foreign events like the execution of Ferrer and the Libyan War, which gave occasion for more than ordinary propaganda, and remember the relatively violent impulses of the Italians, it is no exaggeration to say that the twenty years between the foundation of the party and the War were years of smouldering revolution.

All this was reflected in the distracted leadership of the party. The parliamentary group could achieve little or nothing, since they would not accept the invitations of the Left to enter the Government. Though this course seemed to be in the interests of the working-class as well as of the nation, the group could not afford to give further grounds for the widespread but unjustified belief that they were careerists no better than the non-socialist bourgeoisie, and so throw the masses into the arms of the extremists. Although many of them had gladly cut themselves off from their class, and had voluntarily forgone professional and academic success, they might be represented by people like Mussolini as apostates, the betrayers of their own class and of the workers to whose assistance they appeared to have come. Yet the policy of revolt, too, had been proved unsuccessful, since general strikes were soon broken, and the troops easily put down the riots in the *piazza*. The declared policy of Turati, to awaken the torpid and restrain the violent, was, indeed, formidably difficult to achieve. Working-class products like Mussolini, avid for power and revolution (as his fulminations at Forlì have already shown us), detested the bookish, polished, well-groomed sons of the middle-class. They guessed that the sympathies, the imaginings and the reasonings of the Turatis and the Treves might help to lead the workers to the door-step, but then would always cause them to turn back with a few farthings and some promises. The extreme wing thought that these men could never appreciate that urgency, that desperate impatience for reform, to which sensitive working men are aroused by the torments of an unjust environment. As to the latter the tides of idealism and philosophy were running all in their favour. Croce and others had carried the process of disintegrating Marxian

materialist fatalism very far indeed, and left the way open for thinkers like A. O. Olivetti,[1] to base a sort of Socialism, or syndicalism, upon a philosophy of the will, and a form of revolutionary idealism. The doctrine, as preached in the periodical *Pagine Libere* (founded in 1907), was a doctrine which attacked the great, comprehensive, slow-moving Socialist organisation. It looked for the end as a result of free, autonomous activity of small groups acting in a loose federation, and acting with revolutionary *élan* because not hide-bound by programmes and resolutions worked out in advance. The debt of Mussolini to the *Pagine Libere* is fully acknowledged in his *Political and Social Doctrines of Fascism*, and his behaviour is no less an acknowledgment of it.

Thus there was a potential Socialist governing class only in the sense that the masses were driving forward in a broadly common direction. The potentiality could only become reality if a long period of *uninterrupted political quiet* allowed the extremes to settle down. Meanwhile, the differences of temperament and outlook and creative experience were serious; and the ferment proceeded to produce battles between the intellectuals, a division into a group of Fabians, another of Revolutionaries, another of "Integralists" to keep the first two groups together, and a seceding group of Revolutionary Syndicalists, who said "a plague on *all* your parliamentary parties!" The leaders were gradually dispersed; Bonomi and Bissolati, consulted in 1910 by the King on the formation of a Cabinet, were expelled in 1912; Turati and Treves could not master the conditions following on the War; Mussolini was expelled in October 1914. Just before the War there was a heavy straining for adaptation. After it, the succession was open; and the game was won by Mussolini, who regarded war as the sowing ground of revolution.

Hence, although there was a Parliament in Italy, it had no firm economic and spiritual foundations in the nation. Until 1876 there had been a kind of parliamentarism, because the little Parliament of Piedmont was based on a tiny electorate, and the urge for national independence provided a basis of uniformity in that electorate. In other words there was parliamentarism because the masses were absent, and there were no

[1] A *nationalist* as well as a syndicalist, like Paolo Orano of *La Lupa*.

problems in comparison with the *one* problem. The constitutional conservatives survived till 1876; then the South broke into the charmed circle, and later the people. Bakunin once said: "There is not *one* Italian nation but *five*. The Church; the upper Bourgeoisie; the Middle Class; the Working Class; the Peasantry."

We have so far not evaluated the political significance of the Catholic Church. This was not a stabilising element, like the Church of England in the English political system, but a disturbing, dividing agency. Until 1860 the Pope ruled over three million people and one-seventh of the territory of Italy. By 1870 all this secular power was lost. The Vatican became an enemy of the Kingdom. It stirred up the French and Austrian Catholic zealots to hatred of Italy. At home, its 70,000 priests urged the faithful to keep out of politics and abominate the new Kingdom. The State was obliged to enact punishments for priests who incited to disorder; the mayors of the small towns which had been electorally captured by the influence of the clergy were to be nominated by the Government; charitable funds were transferred to municipal administration; fines and sequestrations rapidly accumulated. The enmity of Church and State was aggravated by the yearly amount which the latter had to find in compensation for the property it had confiscated (all its fixed property, except the parish churches). No great clerical party had as yet united, as in Germany, to link practising Catholics to the State. When it did come, after the War, in the form of the *Partito Popolare*, however good its intentions, it simply added to the confusion and the weakness of coalition governments. The quasi-political action of the Church, in the form of Co-operative, Mutual Benefit, and Educational Associations, Savings Banks, and Trade Unions (in industry about one-tenth, and in agriculture one-fifth the size of the Socialist unions) divided the masses. In these early years the aristocratic families of the Church, if not the Church itself, were laying the foundations of a Catholic Political Party. In 1904, the Vatican permitted avowed Catholic candidatures, and the Catholic local committees won three seats in Parliament. Later, the Pope admitted Catholic candidatures against militant anti-clericals. In the Chamber of 1909 there were 16 Catholics, and in that of 1913, 24.

No Party System. The confusion was directly reflected in the parliamentary system. There were no parties organised on a nation-wide scale. This fact is of basic significance. Nation-wide political parties beneficially serve the community in several ways, but three of their functions are of prime importance: they develop fellowship, they set limits to intransigence, and they constitute the organs of a competition in public criticism which tends to the revelation of truth, or at least to the limitation of untruth. Some further explanation of these is material to the present argument. Their common efforts all over the country produce a national fellowship transcending the petty privileges of localities which stand in the way of agreement on the main point. In England, each political party has become a nation-wide community conciliating or breaking down local egoisms and resistances. Secondly, the party itself may be uncompromising, but in order to be strong it has crushed or softened or harmonised the diverse interests within its own body of constituents. So in England; but not so in Italy. Finally, national parties are essential to the separation of truth from error in public discussion. Possibly 99·9 per cent of any electorate lacks one or all of the requisites of an effective part in political life —time, inclination, energy and knowledge. They cannot see through the complicated and world-extensive problems beyond their own roofs or cities. They do not even know what questions to ask unless they are prompted by the better informed. But efficient enlightenment requires the existence of competition for power in every constituency. World-wide experience clearly shows that when some parties or candidates are unchallenged in certain areas (especially if there is only one, dictatorial, party) and other groups are equally immune from the probing of capable and zealous critics in other parts of the country, there is a loss of "tone" and honesty in politics. Citizens are almost as badly served where there are too many candidates, since then they are actually confused by cross-examinations too complicated for their virgin minds.

Italy had no nation-wide political parties. The most extensively organised was the Socialist Party, and even this had its main strength only in the North and Centre. The other parties were more localised, or appeared here and there, rather as

scattered fragments than as a connected network. There were Constitutional Liberals, including all shades of opinion from extreme Conservatism to Asquithian Liberalism; Radicals; Catholics; Republicans; Reformist Socialists; official Socialists; Independent Socialists. They were again divided into groups following names like Sonnino, Salandra, Giolitti, Nitti, and into ministerial Constitutionalists, opposition Constitutionalists, and independent Constitutionalists.

A Land of Small Towns and Villages. Besides the analysis already made of the lack of a substratum for a nation-wide integrating governing class, certain other facts must be taken into account. Italy is still a country with very few large towns; it is predominantly a land of small towns and tiny villages. One-third of the population lives in 5,450 Communes of under 5,000 inhabitants. The next largest group of Communes, nearly 1,200, are those with from 5,000 to 10,000 inhabitants, containing nearly one-fifth of the population. Thus towns with under 10,000 contain about one-half of the population. These are set in a countryside divided by rivers, divided by the Apennines down the centre, fitted into the valleys in the spurs of the mountains, or high up and out of the way on the hills, separated, in the South, by large tracts of barren, almost desert, land, while Sardinia and Sicily are entirely cut off from the mainland. Napoleon cursed these obstacles to conquering Italy. It is very unlike England, which in area is but one-third of Italy, and is almost one great town stretching over the entire country with a few rather large parks to break the urban settlement. Hence, co-operating with other causes, the great plague of Italy was her *campanilismo*, her parish-pump outlook. Culture, interests, pursuits, dialects produced not merely a regionalism, but an even narrower local patriotism. The sense of municipal differentiation and patriotism goes back continuously to the remotest age of Italian history; and if the Fascist régime were as historical as it professes to be, it certainly would not have abrogated local self-government. This partly explains the furious battles which took place in municipal elections; it partly explains why a riot in the *piazza* was the recognised means of ventilating grievances. The *piazza* in a township was the forum

of democracy, and an open-air club. It also explains, apart from rational policy, why all political parties, but especially the Socialists and the Catholics, exerted themselves to capture the municipalities. It partly explains the violence of the Fascist "reprisal" parties which beat up the villages where the "others" lived.

North and South. Nor was this the only difficulty experienced by those who tried to form nation-wide parties (and let us remember it has taken many decades and much effort to achieve this in England). There was, as we have already observed in another context, a profound difference between Italy north of Naples and Italy south of it. There were some differences of racial stock, of history, though we need not make too much of these. There was a long history, not shared by or with the rest of Italy. There were secondary differences of culture, for example the subjection to the Catholic Church, illiteracy, superstition, proneness to homicide, and black ignorance. There was bitter economic misery. Northern Italy was not rich in 1891 when Pantaleoni made his calculations of the comparative private riches of the Italian regions, but it was nearly twice as rich as Southern Italy.[1] These differences were enhanced by the fact that for centuries North and South were separated by the Papal States, which stretched, neutral and sundering, athwart the Peninsula. Many years elapsed before the railways bridged the gap. And though bright Southerners sought their fortunes in the North (contrary to Scotsmen, who travel South), it needed time to secure an adaptation of North and South which would furnish a sound basis of parliamentary unity. As Cavour had written, "To harmonise the North and the South: there is a greater difficulty than the struggle with Austria or the Church!"

Government by Personal Ascendancy. Yet a government there must be; and it came (as it always comes) as the natural product of such factors as those discussed. If there is not the ascendancy of a class, or of a region, there must be the

[1] *Giornale degli Economisti*, January 1891. Cf. also Di Viti di Marco, *un Trentennio di Lotte Politiche* (1894–1922), and Zingali, *Liberalismo e Fascismo ne Mezzogiorno*, Vol. I.

ascendancy of a person ; if there are no uniting ideas, there must be a tissue-weaving person ; if no bond of interest arises spontaneously, then some person must play off interests against each other in the hope that the greatest common measure of advantage will result. The first Parliaments had been sustained by a small political class ; their differences were not serious and their object, national unity and independence, had transcended such differences as there were. By 1876 this object was accomplished; the budget was balanced ; the masses who had not made the Kingdom began to foot the bill. The old leaders became unpopular, and now, at election after election, all the elements of diversity and contention were represented in Parliament. Thenceforward government by personal ascendancy, intrigue, electoral corruption, dishonest retreat from promised policy, best practised and therefore typified by the statesman Giolitti, became the Government of Italy. It has become the fashion to refer to this form of Government as a " veiled dictatorship." Veiled, yes ; but dictatorship, no. The Press was free ; there was nothing but their own cupidity to cause the electors to be corrupted ; there were opposition leaders who were free to tear down the veil and reveal the viciousness—as some did—of the system.

Once in power each Prime Minister's pre-occupation was to keep in power. As there were so many groups it became necessary to assure the return to Parliament of a number of reliable followers, and of congenial groups. There were a few principal patrons, a number of lesser patrons and hundreds of clients. The elections were " managed " by the Government of the day. This became increasingly difficult with the passage of years, as the Electoral Laws were tightened up, and as the growth of the Socialist Party and Trade Unions, and improved electoral manners, frightened the Government away from cruder methods like the payment of voters, personation, and repetition of votes, " stuffing " the ballot-boxes, and dishonest counting. Yet even in 1913, when universal suffrage operated for the first time, there was widespread denunciation of Giolitti's electoral illegalities, and there were cases even cited before the Electoral Court. If the cruder methods had been abandoned because they had been found out, subtler methods still operated.

Centralised Administration. It must be borne in mind that Piedmont had inherited the Napoleonic system of centralised local government, and the system had been extended to the whole Kingdom. The essence of this was the subordination of the locally elected municipal councils to central control, operating in the first place through the veto of the Prefect of each Province over the legality and expediency of all important affairs, including finance. The veto was a power of political extortion. The Prefects were appointed and dismissed, threatened and rewarded, not as servants of the local government, but as the political agents of the central authority. The local authorities had valuable gifts at their disposal: jobs in clerical offices, the police, and the elementary schools; testimonials of good conduct; employment on public works and distribution of Government loans to these and to agricultural societies; control over charities; control over certain prices and valuations for taxation; recommendations for decorations; and, of great importance, a wide "police of morals." They could be benevolent or tyrannical. The local regulations could be ignored, or made more severe, according to the political pliability of the client; favours could be promoted in Rome, for there were sites to be bought for public works; there were interventions to be made for "cavaliere" and "commendatore"; there were applications to be pushed for barracks, post offices, and, of great importance in a country with irregular rainfall, reservoirs.

Local bosses established themselves with a large clientele, and the whole clique was allowed to batten on the locality by the central Government on condition that it delivered the votes and the members of parliament when they were asked for. The Government had the right to dissolve local councils "for serious motives of public order or for violation of the obligations imposed on them by law"—such dissolutions rose in exceptional numbers in election years. The Mafia of Sicily and the Camorra of Naples were allowed a free rein so long as they supported the Government; even the Socialist councils played the game of favouritism to the members of their own clubs and organisations. The Civil Service was swollen by large numbers, and its services stultified by people who, instead of seeking a living by emigration, secured it by migration into an administrative job. The

Deputies were always easing things with the Departments for their municipal councils, or Prefects, or business men or local contractors or clients who wanted a licence to sell tobacco and salt. But there was worse. As the Deputies (mainly journalists and lawyers) were not paid a parliamentary salary, they had to be subsidised by the Government. Here lay the origin of several unsavoury bank scandals, such as those which smirched the careers of both Crispi and Giolitti. A part of the Press was kept in hand by the same means. The rising industries were be-tariffed and be-subsidised as much for their electoral support as for the national benefits expected from their encouragement.

Transformation of Policy. The intra-parliamentary situation compelled management as subtle and as shady. Directly after the fall of the Right in 1876, Depretis invented the tactics known as *trasformismo*, or transformationism, a euphemistic term for unprincipled changes of allegiance. As soon as a Prime Minister found it impossible to get on with his colleagues, he would move off to other groups in the Chamber; whether he went to the Right or the Left only troubled the consciences of those who, for the time being, lost office. The principal object was not policy, but to leave a sinking Cabinet and unpleasant colleagues, and discover a new following, or enter a new Cabinet. The electorate were not consulted either as to the disruption of the old Cabinet or as to the character of the new one. Elections were put off to the latest legal date; or Parliament was dissolved at the best tactical moment for the Prime Minister and the King, who played fast and loose with Ministers. After 1900 a similar process went on, but under the name of *rimpasto*, that is a "re-kneading." All sorts of tricks and humbug were employed to get rid of unwelcome colleagues; there was frequent personal treachery within the Cabinet and plots from without, and a regular reign of suspicion. Concessions of principle were inherent in the system, if we can assume at all that people began with them.

What were the results? The figures of the Cabinets and their duration are revealing. In the 46 years from 1876 to 1922, there were 32 governments, an average of about 18 months' life for each, and individual Ministers in certain Departments changed

far more often. We might ask, what did these governments think they were about? The great stages of policy of the conservative and "moderate" governments (for here were no liberal governments in the pre-war English sense) were first, to extend the unified administration over the whole country; second, to subdue the opposition of the Church to the new Kingdom; third, to secure colonial outlets; fourth, to meet the demands of the new industrial and commercial and financial magnates and the need for communications and improvement of the fertility of the land by public works of diverse types; fifthly, to hamper the rising working-class movement in factories and on the land—this being the most constant, unwavering, and firm policy; then, later, to extend constitutional liberty, develop some social services (how miserably compared with England and Germany at this time!), and buy off Socialist demands with promises and small concessions.

The governments lasted too short a time to convert policy into law and transform law into administration. They were too short-lived to examine any except the most urgent matters, which, as it were, put themselves on the agenda. Many commissions of enquiry were appointed and reported, but the governments were too pre-occupied by attacks in Parliament and the unrestrained opposition journals, and suspicions of treachery, to achieve much. After all, their first duty was to keep alive. Nor could it be expected that men who but yesterday had been attacking each other with all the Italian amiabilities would work as a team when they met as a Cabinet; or that men who would be furious parliamentary and electoral enemies to-morrow should throw into the common pool to-day all their resources of knowledge and character. In the very nature of the coalition system they could not give themselves away. Yet permanently efficient government requires a forum in which all minds are absolutely frank with each other, and empty their contents on the table.

Thus, in the absence of broad governing classes or widely-accepted principles, persons triumphed. Their tactics may have seemed sly, but could hardly seem dishonest. It was said of Giolitti, that he was "a Jesuit dressed up like a *carabiniere* in mufti." The men grouped around certain parliamentary figures, went by the name of a political tendency, such as Republicans,

or Radicals, or the Centre, or the Demo-Liberals or Constitutionalists, but more important were their personal sub-names, as Depretiani, Selliani, Giolittiani, Sonniniani or Salandrini. It was not an ennobling spectacle to watch ; but could it be helped ? Was not the parliamentary régime the direct expression of Italian social contrasts ? The country could not postpone government altogether until people learned the way a parliamentary life should be lived. The way to learn it was actually to live it, and to outlive its ugly flaws ; even to outlive the inevitable reaction of the favouritism and corruption of a Socialistic governing class in the first years of its advent to office. Giolitti extended the franchise in 1913 from 3 to 7 million. The Italian Parliament lost its bearings ; massive popular forces were now involved which could only be guided, if at all, by real party organisation and propaganda, not by bargains in the lobbies or *combinazioni* made in cafés ; or by electoral corruption. This would have required time ; and a stable centre *bloc*, or appeasement between the Socialists, Republicans and Catholics. The War denied Italy time ; and exacerbated differences already homicidally violent.

In Croce's *History of Italy* : *1871–1915* Giolitti emerges as the hero. He is rather a shabby, even a furtive, hero. He cuts no Gordian knots ; and is rather of the school of Tadpole and Taper than of Bismarck. He is not brilliant ; he gives the impression of a grey old man from birth ; the cunning wire-pulling small-town solicitor ; the crafty broker in a land where little commissions and errands were (and are) always being run. Yet a man may be something of a hero if he contrives to keep the way open for men to improve themselves. Giolitti was under no illusions about himself. He was not a cynic ; it was simply that he took the conditions and the men before him as they were, and expected improvement, if at all, only by a progress in trifles over long years of effort. As the material for his plastic efforts he seemed to see a rhetoric-loving people liable to be swept into adventures by orotund grandiosities ; a people that tends to speak in diminutives or in superlatives, but rarely in moderate phrases. He marked the swift rise of the impetuous, unbalanced Crispi, his failure, and his desertion. He realised that the Italian people were as a rule a kindly, good-natured convivial

people; but that they were what the modern psychologist would call manic-depressive, liable to extremes of passion. Indeed their criminal statistics show a comparatively high proportion of homicide and wounding. From a smile to a joke, from a joke to a dispute, from a dispute to a blow, and from a blow to a stab, is a swifter process in Italy than in the North-Western countries. In England the total homicide per year (infanticide and manslaughter included) is about 300; in Italy until 1914 it was over 3,000; and in the years of a general election it rose, sometimes very considerably. (The murder rate was roughly seven times as great in Sicily as in Lombardy.) Giolitti confronted a nation as yet unamalgamated. A long process of weaving and interweaving, of allowances and concessions, of re-kneading, of coalition, of the cautious extension of constitutional liberties, of coldly calculated colonial expansion and international rehabilitation—this was the policy to be pursued.

A Giolitti was inherent in the situation. Either Giolitti, the wire-puller, or Mussolini, the flail. But the country was still liberal; it was not yet prepared, as it was later prepared by the War, and the destruction of thrones and empires and of the principles of reason and the sanctity of human life, to be beaten down by the flail.

Immature Liberalism. Liberals in Italy, like the moderate socialists, hoped that political consciousness and education would be gradually extended to the masses. They were not enamoured of this system, but saw its inevitability, and hoped for an ultimate triumph as the result of liberalism. The conservatives, that is the rich, applauded the system because it was the efficient safeguard of their property and privileges; the system still kept "the people" out of politics. What freedom meant was as yet understood by very few Italians. When, indeed, should they have learned? It has taken the English three hundred years of steady and heroic struggle to learn; and three hundred years of history provided a Holy Writ from which that religion could always draw lessons and further inspiration. Its benefits were not yet fully manifest, and not even by the time of the outbreak of the War, had such guarantees of freedom

of expression and person and judicial impartiality as we enjoy in England, been granted and made actually effective.

On the one hand there was a revolutionary and anarchical current in the socialist ranks ; and on the other there was a punitive temper in the rich. If the Italians did not know what liberty bestowed, they certainly did not know what liberty required : personal balance between individual energy and self-renunciation. They did not possess what Montesquieu described as the spirit of republics, *virtue* : " the love of the laws and our country which requires a constant preference of public to private interest " ; yet the men of liberal tendencies would have said that by stages the whole country had become a great debating assembly with the Chamber of Deputies as its final forum. Election after election, law after law, had attracted the mind of politically conscious citizens from the Alps to the African sea, and their sharp angles and idiosyncrasies were being smoothed to the point of easier mutual understanding. The nation was as yet very young to have transcended all its internal contrasts, and free discussion and compromise were slowly, but nevertheless surely, having their beneficial influence. All national contrasts would in the long run be resolved by the liberal method.

The Heavy Waves of Nationalism and " Idealism. "

This might have been true ; but it assumed that enough people would be interested in maintaining the liberal method until its successes should become so evident to the masses at large that no temptation or menace could ever induce them to overthrow it, or remain passive in the face of its destruction. Unfortunately, this was not to be. For the nation was established at a juncture in European history not propitious for liberalism. It ran directly into the most passionate storms of anti-liberal, anti-rational iconoclasm, and it could never run on an even keel. Two waves of idealism, the first a Socialist, and then from about 1906 a nationalist, dashed against the bourgeois policy and shook the foundations of the parliamentary system. In both, as we shall show in a moment, there was a demand for something more than Giolitti could or wanted to give. I do not wish to argue that this produced Fascism, but it did produce some Fascists, for example Mussolini. New groups of *sanguine* thinkers

arose to challenge *laissez faire* and toleration. They were not prepared to be patient. They were not prepared to take the Italian as they found him, but ardently wished to remake Italy by remaking the Italians, and the first thing to do was to overturn existing institutions.

Economic Progress and Poverty. Not that the democratic system had not worked well from the standpoint of the material welfare of the country. We must not be misled by Fascist enthusiasts who speak as though history began only in 1922, or that the Risorgimento itself did not take place until the Fascists came into power. We ought to remember that the material progress of Italy from 1870 to 1914 was remarkable.[1] Although a large part of the well-being of a country depends upon the spontaneous enterprise of individuals, the Government can powerfully help or hinder. There is no doubt whatever that the Italian Governments were of considerable help. The possible criticism, that they might have done more, must face the answer that, accepting the liberal creed, which most European countries did, the Government could do no more. The Fascist system has only been able to do more by totally destroying political liberty. Whether this will be for the good of

[1] Here are some bare indices of economic progress :

(a)	*Industrial establishments*	in 1876	were 9,000, with 188,000 workers.
	,, ,,	in 1911	,, 244,000, ,, 2,330,000 workers.
(b)	*Metallurgical industry* .	in 1870	production valued at 30,000,000 lire.
	,, ,, .	in 1911	,, ,, ,, 500,000,000 lire.
(c)	*Chemical industry* .	in 1870	,, ,, ,, 12,000,000 lire.
	,, ,, .	in 1911	,, ,, ,, 200,000,000 lire.
(d)	*Hydro-electricity* . .	in 1870	nil ; in 1913, 7,000 works with 600,000 kw.
(e)	*Mercantile marine* .	in 1881	comprised 135,843 tons.
	,, ,, .	in 1914	,, 1,500,000 tons.
(f)	*Silk industry* . .		from almost nil to the first place in the world for raw silk and a high place for manufactures.
(g)	*Foreign commerce* .	in 1871	valued at 2,000,000,000 lire.
	,, ,, .	in 1913	,, ,, 6,157,000,000 lire.
(h)	*Agricultural production*.	in 1896	valued at 5,000,000,000 lire.
	,, ,, .	in 1910	,, ,, 7,000,000,000 lire.
(i)	*Railways* . . .	in 1860	were 1,758 kilometres.
	,, . . .	in 1913	,, 17,649 ,,
(j)	*Wealth in Savings Banks*	in 1881	amounted to 980,000,000 lire.
	,, ,, ,, ,, .	in 1912	,, ,, 5,822,000,000 lire.
(k)	*Elementary education* .	in 1872	comprised 39,398 schools ; 1.7 mill. pupils.
	,, ,, .	in 1908	,, 61,497 ,, 8 ,, ,,
(l)	*Mortality* . . .	in 1872	was 30 per mille.
	,, . . .	in 1913	,, 18 ,, ,,

the country in the long run is, with the results of twelve years before us, still doubtful.

Yet in spite of this substantial economic and social improvement, Italy remained a very poor country compared with England and America and even France. According to figures prepared by Professor Corrado Gini, perhaps the most noted, though in Fascist Italy not the most beloved, of Italian statisticians, the order of riches is shown thus.[1]

	1914.		1925.	
	Wealth.	*Income.*	*Wealth.*	*Income.*
Italy	596	105	553	107
France	1,455	182	1,306	196
Great Britain	1,471	237	2,600	419
United States	2,040	337	3,333	614

Italy, to take income only, was less than one-third as well off as America ; less than one-half as well-off as England ; nearly one-half only as well-off as France. Hence, gradual and steady improvement was not felt to be enough. There were movements which wanted more, or wanted different things, or at a higher speed. There was no substantial widespread patriotic sentiment calculated to preserve and improve ; many people were hungry and miserable ; there were too many interests prepared to exploit or destroy. The political conflict over the distribution of wealth, literally over a slice of wheaten bread, was severer in Italy than anywhere else and with reason. Hundreds of thousands a year were forced to leave their own country to make a living. All the parties of the Left (but not the Socialists in the same degree) and the Catholics were regionalist decentralisers, which was only another way of saying " let Italy perish, so long as we can capture and hold the municipalities and provinces friendly to us."

International Nullity. As a heritage of the Risorgimento, which was carried through successfully only with foreign sympathy and help, Italy had to brave the contempt of a world which now measured national greatness mainly by the size of

[1] These are in equal gold units.

armies, navies, colonial possessions, and material comforts. Her emigrants were almost universally treated with cruelty and contempt, hunted as a sport, and forced to do the most servile work under the most servile conditions.

About 1908 the Socialist and Nationalist waves of idealism began to run fast and rear high above the roof of Parliament and the material fruits of the Giolittian system. The younger generation was smitten with disgust at the chicanery of the tactics, the meanness of the destiny and rewards, to which men aspired, and ashamed of their international humility. They were also bored. They wanted something new. They hardly knew what they wanted; but they were prepared to sacrifice themselves and others for non-material rewards. There was a neo-Hegelian current in philosophy, a nationalist irredentist movement in domestic and international affairs, a revolutionary ferment among the Socialists. What was common to these streams, headed in different directions? It was the special quality of their dynamism. Each by itself would begin by smashing the Doll's House of middle-class ideals. Let us, at this point, follow the exposition of Gentile, the philosopher who has not merely found a spiritual home and a practical outlet in the Fascist fold, but has actually helped to construct that home in a fashion more orderly and systematic than the practical Fascists were themselves able or willing to do.

Gentile's Idealism. Gentile holds that between 1900 and 1915 there were two souls struggling in a single State, and that by their nature there was no room for compromise between them. The one was the reigning spirit; the spirit that began with a shallow materialism and positivism, enumerated the expected rewards of its intended activities, made its utilitarian balance-sheet, and operated through Parliament to secure the registration of the plans made on the basis of these calculations. It was without nobility, without devotion, and regarded the satisfaction of the individual and his rather base claims for sovereignty as prior to the nation. "They took the Cash in hand, and waived the Rest." About 1905, a new ferment was noticeable, fated to develop, to challenge and finally overcome the first. It was Idealism. How does Gentile define this?

"It is faith in the necessity of the advent of an ideal reality, a concept of life which must not enclose itself within the limits of fact, but progress and incessantly transform itself and make itself adequate to a superior law which acts upon the spirit with the force of its own intrinsic worth."[1]

Idealism in this sense, says Gentile, is the very essence of the Risorgimento, especially visible in the character of Mazzini. To him life was not a game but a mission ; individual life received its value from the missions it accepted, without material reward. The Risorgimento was such a mission, and called for the sacrifice of everyday gains, and offered the cause which transcended the individual and gave him value. That is why there were so few people who participated in the seventy-year fight. Only a few could then see what idealism implied, and accept its austere laws : such men as Gioberti, Cavour, Vittorio Emanuele, Garibaldi, and the rest of the relatively tiny group of patriots. Gentile argues that this sense of the ideal reigned in Italy until the fall of the historic Right, since the leaders of the Right were the personal continuation of the patriotic movement. Then came the Giolittian type of régime. The Individual, instead of the State, became the major term in the State-Individual relationship. Crispi fell from power because he was not in harmony with this tendency of the Governments and the people of the Left. All his measures depended for their success upon a high degree of national pride, a recognition of a final religious authority in the State. It was not there. Its place was taken by the ethics of Masonry, by materialism, by the Socialist insistence upon rights and the repudiation of duties and certainly, of a general sense of Duty, such as Mazzini had taught. Impalpable realities were ridiculed ; patriotism became mere rhetoric ; and the demo-socialistic world mapped its course by Facts, repudiating the Soul as its guide.

Then came the reaction : anti-positivism, anti-materialism, anti-Marxism. The old Italian classics, with their call to the ideal life, were reprinted and widely discussed. The names are a warrant of the tendency. There was Vico, restored after centuries, the anti-rationalist and the opponent of Descartes ; and Rosmini, Gioberti, Mazzini, Spaventa, De Sanctis. In earlier

[1] *Origini e Dottrina del Fascismo*, pp. 18 ff.

pages we described the advent of Sorel, whose fundamental importance was his denial of the intellect as the sole guiding force in social life, his replacement of will for fate in the Marxian prognosis of the class-war, and of the power of religion as the dynamic force. All this was preparing a generation to use force, if necessary, to attain its ideal; it was preparing a generation to die, if need be, for an ideal end whose consummation, whose features even, lay beyond their own lifetime.[1] Hence, the collaborationist policy of the Socialists was abandoned by the younger generation; hence patriotism, nationalism, and irredentism were fanned into an insatiable flame. Hence orthodox Liberalism, Socialism, and Masonry became the targets for attack, and from triumphant offensive were driven back on the defensive.

It is important to observe that the various offshoots of idealism were not united in a programme. Not agreed upon what was "great," they were yet united in their readiness to undertake great enterprises and submerge their individual judgements and interests therein. They were equally united in hostility to the existing régime and its machinator, Giolitti. In Gentile's opinion, the internal stress of Italy could be symbolised by the single combat of Mazzini versus Giolitti: the leader of a State against the mediator between the selfish contestants for the State. Finally, the entry of Italy into the War was the victory of Mazzinian idealism. Let us once more define this idealism in Gentile's words, *since it is Gentile's opinion that Fascism is the tendency which during and after the War became, and still continues to be, the incarnation of idealism*:

"Life is not actually what it is, but what it ought to be; a life altogether full of duties and difficulty, which always demands efforts of will and abnegation and hearts disposed to suffer to render possible the good: the only life worthy of being lived. An anti-materialist conviction, essentially religious."

There is no doubt, if the analysis is true, that a young nation was heading for troubled times and extraordinary régimes, if for

[1] This finds special expression in Oriani, *La Rivolta Idedle*, 1906. Of this writer Mussolini declared in 1924 (Preface to collected edition of Oriani's works): "We are nourished by these pages and consider Alfredo Oriani as a Poet of the Fatherland, as an anticipator of Fascism, as an exalter of Italian energies."

greatness beyond them. It was making itself ready to obey, and as, in the nature of things, commands cannot be given by God save only through the mind and tongue of man, a generation was preparing itself for submission to a dictator. Nor is that all. Those who pass away from Facts to the claims of the Soul, leave the region of measurable and therefore controllable things, and the region of self-control, and checks and balances, and leap forward without reins to their intuitions or imaginations. He goes furthest, says Cromwell, who knows not whither he goeth. There is no rudder, no chart, no pilot; but, as Gentile would say, and as the Fascist apologists shout, action comes first, and a doctrine afterwards. Aping the famous motto of Mazzini, *Pensiero e Azione*, Thought and Action, they act first and think afterwards. This is not to be judged so harshly in the isolated life of an individual, for there the sins of commission and thoughtlessness are visited mainly upon the individual, and he perhaps may enjoy his remorse. But in the life of nations mistakes are visited upon millions who have had no part in the policy, and are compelled to pay for the blithe intuitions of the rulers. For a sense of messianic duty breeds a sense of self-sacrifice, and those who are prepared to sacrifice themselves have no particular compunction in sacrificing others. No liberal State can live in such an atmosphere.

We must consult the opinions of two other historians, Gioacchino Volpe, now Professor of History in the University of Rome, necessarily Fascist, though once a Liberal; and Benedetto Croce, anti-Fascist.

Volpe[1] corroborates Gentile's argument in his own independent account of the years 1900 and 1914, and adds Nationalism to Idealism. Italy reacted to the bitter, energetic, and sanguine realities of the modern age, that of the machine, the "strenuous life," and well-armed imperialism. All nations were seeking new destinies; Greater Britain was still expanding, Germany was moving oceanwards; America was becoming an Imperial power. Nationalism was, in a world of ever greater international connections and the spread of ideas, becoming more insistent and clamant and certain of itself. Enrico Corradini, the Nationalist

[1] *Italia in Cammino*, pp. 93 ff.

leader, then anathema to Mussolini,[1] fulminated against parties, classes, individuals, and humanity, and pleaded for the passionate devotion to the fate and renewal of the nation, Italy. He denounced the Socialist conception of life, lifted the banner of opposition against Austria, incited to manifestations in favour of irredentism, and sought to deepen the meaning of such integrating institutions as the Monarchy, the Army, and the Fatherland. The international humiliation of Italy was deplored, the squalid ends of the national existence rebuked as cowardice. There was no high sense of national purpose, the idealists complained, and Giovanni Papini,[2] of the *Voce* of Florence, declared, " This Italy, without a unity of its vision, needs someone to beat it, so that it shall awaken, and someone to incite it in order that it shall act."

The traditional and home-keeping Italian " patriotism " was to be transformed into " nationalism," as in other countries, to assert itself in deeds and active thoughts, deliberately to proceed with Italian commerce and culture beyond the seas. Not for Italy the pacifist retirement of a Switzerland. This tendency was not necessarily illiberal, any more than the revolutionary Socialists, or new grouping among the liberals, were, but represented the rise of new energies, a substitute for a flabby *laissez faire* which was letting the State go to pieces. Crispi, who had died in 1907 an almost forgotten figure, was now lauded as the great Italian, " with the true spirit of the fatherland"; "the last great Italian statesman and authentic man of government, that is to say capable of willing, of initiating, of acting, without fear, without compassion, without compromise."[3] Even Socialists admitted the need of a wider interest in international affairs, and that it was not enough to guard one's own patrimony. Even Nitti, Liberal of Liberals, reproved the pacifist tendencies of democracy in his work, *Il Partito radicale e la nuova democrazia industriale*, published in 1907.

[1] Corradini, Rocco and the rest, since 1922 Fascist idols and " precursors " of Fascism, were then referred to in these terms by Lanzillo, Mussolini's bosom friend: "It is useless to say that French nationalism, truly admirable for its dignified earnestness, has nothing to do with the monkey-like buffooneries of Italian nationalism."

[2] Having thus helped Italy to get someone to beat it, this fellow has now become a pious Catholic, very concerned about the life of Christ and the life of Dante.

[3] p. 98.

All this was anti-Christian, anti-passive, and in favour of self-assertion, "sacred egoism." Even a Catholic tendency flowed with the same inner feeling and roughly in the same direction, that is towards national self-assertion, and political obedience in energetic fulfilment of the will of the nation. An advanced section of the Church, *La Democrazia Cristiana*, although wishing to be independent of it, intended to carry these ideas to the people and the middle class, in order to win them over from their positivism, Masonry or atheism. They held with Mazzini that either democracy would be religious or it could not exist. The Papacy itself, says Volpe, was being re-spiritualised, and even absorbed something of Italian nationalism.

Nationalist and irredentist agitation gave rise to much science and pseudo-science, history and pseudo-history, regarding the race and nationality of the people in the areas concerned, especially in Bolzano and around Trieste. Nationalist societies such as the *Dante Alighieri* arose and planted committees all over the world, to spread the tidings of Italian culture and maintain the spirit of Italian immigrants. Irredentism grew stronger, and the Italians of Dalmatia, Istria, and Trentino were organised and encouraged in their work and hopes by the *Lega Nazionale* and other pro-Italian groups, discreetly aided by the *Dante*.

The Nationalist movement, to become the Nationalist Association in 1910, began with the writings of Corradini[1]; and between 1902 and that time worked through a large group of writers in a number of journals.

In 1903 the movement became more systematically organised, and set out as its objects :

"1. The organisation of the governing classes and all those in the orbit of plebiscitary institutions for better social services ;

"2. To combat the exploitation of the workers by Socialist agitation ;

"3. To improve the relations between capital and labour ;

"4. To guarantee good treatment to all kinds of labour and support and guide in any circumstances those workers who, personally, or in associations are prepared to co-operate in such a programme :

"5. To oppose the agitation of the Leagues and the Chambers of

[1] His principal work was published in 1914, *Il Nazionalismo Italiano*.

Labour by the combined action of our associates against impositions, outrages, violation of liberty and property ;

"6. To promote with all the appropriate means the economic interests of the country."

There was a fairly rapid spread among the upper middle class and the rich, especially the manufacturers and merchants of Milan and Turin and the high financiers of Rome, and it is not surprising to find that its convention at the end of 1910 included a large sprinkling of *marchesi* and *baroni* and a very large number of army officers. This association was the most energetic supporter of the Libyan War (Mussolini was for proletarian reasons *against* it)[1] ; the most energetic supporter of the Great War, even in favour of Austria, when Mussolini was still against it ; and later a very important nucleus of Fascism (when Mussolini, though striving against it, became almost indistinguishable from it). *It was specially the pioneer in the idea of the subordination of employer and employed to the Nation.*

The winds of doctrine blew ever more violently. Through Milan and Florence there came the impetus of James, Sorel and Bergson ; from France there blew the excited Futurist breeze, if not towards a certainty of its own, at least against the certainty of others. The authoritarian, anti-democratic, monarchical, nationalism of Maurras together with the Catholic authoritarianism and nationalism of Barrès leavened the new generation. All this, taken in connection with the European tension, the simmering Balkan troubles, the pressure of Austria towards the Adriatic, the Turkish renovation, the Libyan war, and further Balkan and European heralds of the approaching storm, brought the idealist, nationalist, voluntarist, action-at-any-cost schools to a state of hysteria, attracted the younger

[1] On August 26th, 1914, Mussolini, opposing the *Idea Nazionale*, the Nationalist newspaper, which was agitating for war, thus characterised Corradini, "in his recent electoral campaign at Marostica he gave an example of the most scandalous, indecent, vulgar, and repugnant opportunism. . . . Corradini's article is the manifestation, typical, qualified, and cynical, of nationalist *delirium tremens*." On the death of Corradini in 1931, the Duce said in the course of a eulogy in the Senate : "It may be said of Corradini that he appeared on the threshold of the present century as the announcer of a new time which was imminent. . . . He was the advocate and agent of the fusion between Nationalism and Fascism. He was not only in 1919, but in 1896, not only a Fascist of the first hour, but of the very first hour !"

men, and prepared the way for an overthrow of the liberal State. They already lived in that state of "high moral tension" which, over twenty years later, Mussolini, on the crest of the wave, and director of the tempest, proclaimed as one of the fundamental necessities for the continuation of the Fascist régime.

Had there been no war, would all these tendencies and this explosive force have settled down in the parliamentary régime? Would they have entered into the electoral strife, using the universal franchise of 1913 to propagate their ideas and collect their supporters, and then have entered into the parliamentary combinations habitual to Italy? Would they have changed the alignment of parties and made the old system at once more energetic and less venal? No one can tell; for they themselves were the products of the very Darwinian, Nietzschean, Sorelian, expansionist dæmons that produced the War. They all sprung from the same state of mind. One without the other is practically unthinkable.

But what does Croce, stout old Croce (with a grocer's body and Minerva's eye), say, in his *History of Italy*, about the movement of beliefs and wishes in the years between 1900 and 1913? According to him the philosophic search for "values" came out into the open to wrestle with and overthrow an agnosticism and materialism which was already beyond its apogee. But instead of a well-balanced morality resulting from this, there arose only the ideological reflection of "industrialism and Bismarckism, an uneasy condition of mind, a combination of lust for enjoyment, the spirit of adventure and of joy of conquest, frantic craving after power, restlessness and withal lack of enthusiasm and indifference." Such men as D'Annunzio (once a Socialist candidate!) embodied this trend most effectively —things dazzling, rhetorical, and fundamentally gross, he substituted for rationalism. It was not "idealism" that resulted, but "idealistic irrationalism" and "sensationalistic spiritualism." Croce himself was not like these; he was not a positivist but an improver upon classic idealism; he was not like the rest who confused sentiment with ardour, praised initiative but forgot persistence, experienced restlessness but did not create movement. For him, philosophy was a serious task, which meant work, contemplation, the testing of distinctions. He clung, he

says, to liberty, against the Nietzscheans, not because it promised the will to power, *but because it guaranteed the power to will, which is the moral consciousness.* The rest, even Gentile the pupil and the colleague of Croce, turned to their mixture of "antiquated theological speculation and modern decadentism," which is Croce's definition of Gentile's "idealism." The young combined it with the spirit prevalent in Europe, violence and cynicism and a lust for conquest and adventure. Imperialism and nationalism were the fruits. To such as Gentile, the State came, by a series of philosophic stages, to be the omnipotent god, demanding sacrifices of his creatures. To Croce and those like him, the State was only "a stern practical necessity which the moral consciousness accepts, while at the same time it dominates, controls, and directs it."

So the world moved on towards the War; and so Italy moved on, just as inevitably, though there were final hesitations and convulsions before she entered. The next task is to trace the trajectory of neutrality, war, defeat, recovery, and victory, disappointment, convulsion—and Fascism.

CHAPTER IV

WAR AND THE AFTERMATH

ITALY had no clear obligation to enter the war by any alliances or agreements even as binding as those of France, Russia, and England. She was the third member of the Triple Alliance, with Germany and Austria ; but her obligations were limited to support of her allies in a defensive war, and not in a war provoked by them. Nor had she any direct important interests involved in the actual struggle between the Powers. She had had ample causes to quarrel with Austria, and yet was bound to her by treaty. Neither England nor France had in the last forty years given her overwhelmingly strong reasons to join them. If her interests and her duty were both rather divided, so was opinion in the country and in Parliament. The issues raised by the Libyan war still agitated opinion. The elections of October 1913 had been fought in a bitter, irreconcilable spirit, with general accusations of violence and corruption. The Nationalist group had obtained representation, and the Catholics, the Radicals, and the Socialists were returned much strengthened. Giolitti fell in March 1914, and Antonio Salandra, a " Liberal of the Right," became Prime Minister. As already chronicled, the year 1914 was especially violent in Italy. The War burst upon a divided nation, governed for the time being by the conservative groups (for that is what " Liberals of the Right " meant).

Italy, who declared her neutrality on August 2nd, 1914, suffered great agitation until her declaration of war in May 1915. Giolitti, whose influence was still great, was a very strong supporter of neutrality, in the opinion that much could be gained from Austria by diplomatic extortion, not involving Italy in any danger or loss. At the most critical moment in May 1915, three hundred deputies left their cards at his house as a sign of approval. Some Conservatives, such as Sonnino, were prepared to enter on the side of the Central Powers, partly out of quixotic

regard for their engagements in the Triple Alliance, and partly to safeguard their close commercial and financial relations. Some Nationalists were for war on the side of Germany, whose ideas of the "strong State" and "shining armour" pleased them; other Nationalists and Irredentists thought it a good opportunity to win back the unredeemed territory; while others proposed neutrality with the threat of war, as the way to the same end. Refugees and deserters from the armies of the Central Powers formed foci of agitation. The Catholics were strong neutralists, because Austria was Catholic, because they disliked anti-clerical France and the francophile Freemasons, and because their religion enjoined Peace. Salandra and his Conservative groups[1] favoured a neutrality with extortion from Austria, a neutrality which should always have the threat of war in it, which should give time for the necessary military and spiritual preparations for war, and which was expected to merge into war at some time because Italy could not miss participation in a glorious and arduous creative event in world history. The Republican Party was in favour of the Entente. The Radicals, representative of large industry linked to French capital, were in favour of war on the side of the Entente. The bulk of the Socialists, led by the orthodox leaders of the Party, took the stand they had taken in the Libyan War: uncompromisingly against all capitalist national wars. The Reformist Socialist group, headed by Bissolati, were for intervention on the side of the Entente. The Revolutionary Syndicalists, led by Labriola, Orano and others, were in favour of entry on the side of the Allies as a means to national mass unity, as a quickening of the national spirit, and in the hope of a revolutionary situation. The country itself, as a whole, was apathetic; neither peasants, nor small landowners, nor business men, nor independent artisans had any interest in a war. But the big industrialists of the metal and machine industries, the large landowners (with Salandra), the anarchists and syndicalists (the Sorelians), were for war on the side of England and France, the business models and partners of the former, and the spiritual second homes of the latter. But the War itself began to rouse compelling passions. Thousands of youngsters at the Universities,

[1] Cf. Salandra, *Italy and the Great War*, 1932.

inflamed by stories from the Front, and the words of the volunteer, D'Annunzio, shouted for an "expedition of the Thousand" to Trieste!

Mussolini and the War. What was Mussolini's position? For some weeks he was as divided as the national mind was. He began by taking the official Socialist attitude and, together with Treves and Turati, signed the Socialist declaration against war so late as September 22nd, and this with his usual passionate certainty. But he was a revolutionary in temper, and his friends, Cesare Battisti, now returned to Italy to preach the crusade against Austria, Filippo Corridoni, the working man Socialist and nationalist of Milan, who could fill the streets more easily than Mussolini, and members of the Syndicalist group like Lanzillo and Sergio Panunzio, who carried on a polemic with Mussolini in the pages of the *Avanti* on the question of intervention, worked upon him. He was not by nature a friend of the German "hordes"; their racial theories were not flattering to the Latin peoples. Therefore he was against Italian intervention on the Austrian side. His sympathies on the other side broke out more and more clearly. The Socialist Congress of September 9th, 1914, declared for neutrality at any cost, but Mussolini was already wavering. At the end of October he asked the Executive of the Party to declare against neutrality. He was in a minority of one. He resigned, and gave up the editorship of the *Avanti*. This could have been no easy decision for Mussolini. It is true that the evidence of de Ambris and Angelica Balabanoff tends to show that he turned from neutrality to intervention as a way of making a career and especially to get money for a newspaper of his own.[1] Even if this were true, it could not make milder the several weeks of uncertainty and spiritual torment: a bitter travail for a man of action, of ardent mind, and of strong passions. Early in October he had written, "I am not ashamed to confess that in the course of these two tragic months my mind has suffered oscillations, uncertainty, trepidation; and who, let me ask, among men of intelligence in Italy and abroad has not suffered, more or less profoundly, the hard travail of this

[1] de Ambris, op. cit., pp. 18–81.

inward crisis ? "[1] It is only if this is understood that one can understand the fierceness of his onslaught on the old politicians and the parliamentary régime when he himself returned from the Front. It is said that French money was given him to found the *Popolo d'Italia* in December 1914. This is possible ; and if the money were accepted conscientiously to fight a cause, our concern with it would end there. But the rumour that the money was paid for an insincere conversion set the Socialist Party irreconcilably against him. I am inclined to believe, not that his interventionism was false, but that his neutrality was due to superficial attachment to the international ideology of Socialism. Hitherto he had shouted dogmas. He now advocated intervention because the orthodox Socialist hope in the fraternity of nations was unfounded, because he was impatient with middle-class calculations of the relative advantages of neutrality and intervention, because he felt that great historic events were occurring, and *Italy* taking no part ! To know why Mussolini became a warrior, it is hardly necessary to do more than observe his physique. He itches to do ; and, as he says, neutrality would convert him into a mummy.

On November 15th, 1914, the first number of his journal appeared. It was " a Socialist daily " and bore the mottoes, " Who has steel has bread," by Blanqui, and " The revolution is an idea which has found bayonets," by Napoleon. The famous article " Audacia," appears, and with this he began to explain why war was necessary for him, and why it was the proper destiny of the Italian people. " We must distinguish between war and war, as we distinguish between crime and crime, between blood and blood."

" Absolute truth, about which there is no dispute and which can neither be denied nor renounced, is dead truth ; worse still, it is murderous truth. We are not, and we do not wish to be, mummies, everlastingly immovable, with our faces turned towards the same horizon and enclosed in the narrow hedges of subversive hypocrisy, where formulæ are mechanically mumbled like the prayers of ritualist religions. We are men, and live men, who wish to give our contribution, however modest, to historical creation."

[1] Bonavita, op. cit., pp. 154 ff.

It was clear to him that the destinies of European Socialism were closely bound up with the result of the European War. He was one of the very few men who saw that the world after the War would be quite different from the world before 1914.

"The mind and the heart refuse to believe (*remember William James's proposition that belief in the truth of a proposition tends to bring about its truth in fact*[1]) that all this blood shed on the soil of three Continents will not yield any fruit. Everything goes to make us believe instead that the Europe of to-morrow will be profoundly transformed. More liberty or more reaction. More militarism or less militarism. . . . If to-morrow there is a little more liberty in Europe, an environment therefore politically more adapted to the development of Socialism, to the formation of the capacities of the working classes, they will be deserters and apostates (*which insult had been launched at Mussolini since the Socialist meeting at Bologna had expelled him from the Party*[1]) who at the moment when to act was the question, declined and stood aside; if to-morrow, instead, Prussian reaction should triumph in Europe and, after the destruction of Belgium with the planned annihilation of France, should lower the level of human civilisation, the deserters and apostates will be all of those who did nothing to avert the catastrophe."

Like so many Italians he felt the call of the Latin sister and her history. France was the land of the Revolution. Whatever Mussolini may have felt about the parliamentary system which is one of the Revolution's products, and whatever the pressure of circumstances may have had in store for him and those principles in days still to come, France was the vindicator of human liberty and equality.

"Do you think," he says (December 13th, 1914), "that these sentimental manifestations will resurrect Belgium? That they will raise up France? This France which has bled for Europe in the Revolution and the wars from '89 to '71 and from '71 to '14? To the France of the Rights of Man do you therefore offer only some fine phrases? Tell me—and this is the supreme reason for intervention—tell me: is it human, is it civilised, is it Socialist, to remain peacefully at the window while blood runs in torrents, and say, 'I am not going to move and nothing concerns me at all.'"

But Germany was the country of absolutism and that tendency to uniformity, over-organisation, and rigid sociological principle,

[1] Author's words in parentheses.

which he rejected when he rejected Marxism as the death of ultimate proletarian emergence. On January 25th, 1915, he said :

" When all is said, Germany is governed by a clique of cynics : of people who justify everything ; of people who have defied treaties as scraps of paper which can be thrown into the waste-paper basket whenever it is convenient " ;

and later on, October 29th, 1915, he says, in an article on his friend Corridoni, killed at the front :

" In Filippo Corridoni interventionism was born from the impulse to defend latinity against the barbarous tribe of flat-feet, as Blanqui said, ' Which tries once more to descend from its foggy plains towards the sunny coasts of our Mediterranean.' "

So Mussolini turned his flaming oratory against the neutralists in all classes. Away with the old Italy ! " Is not to cry, ' We want war ! ' in the existing state of affairs much more revolutionary than to cry ' Down with war ! ' ? " Yes ; Mussolini saw that the revolution might come through the war. Here was the chance !

" Whoever thinks too much of his own skin not to go out and fight in the trenches will certainly not be found in the streets on the day of battle. . . . We must act, move, fight and if it be necessary die. Neutrals have never dominated events. They have always been overwhelmed by them. It is blood which gives movement to the resounding wheel of history " (December 13th, 1914). And so, he cries out a word, " which I would never have pronounced in normal times, but which to-day I shout loudly, with unrestrained voice, without reservations, and with a sure faith, a fearful and fascinating word : *War !* "

The Beginning of Fascism. This was the beginning of the Fascist movement in Italy, for it was the beginning of an agitation which set the people against Parliament, which showed that determined little groups full of revolutionary *élan* could stir and command a people and dominate a Government. Confuting the massive stupidity of Karl Marx, it showed that a people could be made to act against rationally calculated

balance-sheets of economic advantage, and be driven mad for other purposes, even for death. It was also the beginning of Mussolini's final stage in his hatred, ever swelling in bitterness, of the official leaders of the Socialist Party. Until the end of November 1914 he was still a member of the Party. He spoke as a Socialist. But on November 25th the orthodox leaders who had returned to the control of the *Avanti* had their revenge. In a meeting of some three thousand infuriated delegates, Mussolini, after being heard with contemptuous interruptions, was expelled from the Party. The pitilessness of his future antagonism to official Socialism was ominously foretold in his closing phrases :

" To-day you hate me, because in your heart of hearts you love me still. . . . But you have not seen the last of me ! Twelve years of my party life are, or ought to be, a sufficient guarantee of my faith in Socialism. Socialism is something which takes root in the heart. . . . But I tell you that from now onwards I shall never forgive nor have pity on anyone who in this momentous hour does not speak his mind for fear of being hissed or shouted down. . . . I shall neither forgive nor have pity on those who are purposely reticent, those who show themselves hypocrites and cowards. And you will find me still on your side. You must not think that the middle classes are enthusiastic about our intervention. They snarl and accuse us of temerity, and fear that the proletariat, once armed with bayonets, will use them for their own ends. Do not think that by taking away my membership card you will be taking away my faith in the cause, or that you will prevent my still working for Socialism and revolution."[1]

All over the country *Fasci di azione revoluzionaria,* or Groups for Revolutionary Action, sprang up to agitate for entry into the War. (They were not Mussolini's creation.) Mussolini, Battisti, Corridoni, D'Annunzio, Nationalists, Irredentists, University youths, moved from place to place encouraging new groups, speaking at meetings. Already men who were to be among the first of the post-war Fascists were co-operating with Mussolini at Milan, among them Michele Bianchi, first Secretary General of the Party, and one of the leaders of the March on

[1] The publication called *Le Origini e Lo Sviluppo del Fascismo,* published by the Fascist Party in 1928, reports this speech only down to the words " hypocrites and cowards " ; it does not go on to the " middle classes " and the continued Socialism of Mussolini.

Rome. The groups clamoured for general revolutionary action. The Monarchy came under particularly violent attacks. By the spring of 1915 a part of the nation, but certainly not a majority, was inflamed to intervention point. The Salandra Government, though offered much by Austria, was offered more in the secret Treaty of London. On the 3rd of May the Triple Alliance was denounced. From the 13th to the 16th there were tumults for war all over the country. Responsive to the popular outcry, and therefore against the alignment of forces in Parliament, the Crown refused to accept Salandra's resignation offered in fear of a blow from Giolitti. On May 24th (to become an anniversary in the Fascist Calendar), war was declared. As Mussolini said in the *Popolo* of May 17th,

"The terrible week of Italy's passion closed yesterday [with the denunciation of the Alliance] with the victory of the people. . . . The irruption of the Roman citizens in the sacred precincts of the Chamber is a sign of the times. It is only by chance that Montecitorio is not a pile of blackened bricks. But it is to the people of Italy that we owe it that Italy is to-day not at the level of Greece and Turkey. . . . A will to war. It was declared by the people above the parliamentary herd. On the body of the nation many parasites of various kinds had fastened, Giolittians, Clericals, Socialists. But the Nation—with one shake—liberated itself from its molesting and insidious burden."

Parliament had been badgered and intimidated into the grant of emergency powers to the Government. It boded no good for the parliamentary system of Italy, already in contempt.

Mussolini was now detached from the normal political parties, having been all his life a sworn uncompromising enemy of the bourgeoisie, and having recently become a reject of Socialism. Henceforward, if he wished to be a political force at all, this must necessarily be outside existing institutions, perhaps outside the parliamentary system itself. He lived in an abnormal state of exaltation. The Nation had completely permeated and enraptured him. His sense of a divine mission was evident in every action and every word. His own ordinary feelings no longer seemed ordinary, but to a high degree ennobled, even deified, and the works of his opponents darkest sin. Mussolini's

prose became especially pungent. He thought less subtly, and felt more strongly, than others.

Surprisingly, he did not leave for the trenches at once. His older friends did.

He was in the Army from November 1915 until he was wounded in January 1917. For the student of political science, this is a most important period in the evolution of Fascism. Mussolini watched the men, one can hardly say the "comrades," around him, and meditated on the conditions of obedience, loyalty, morale, and suffering. Under fire, or in the emphatic silence of the falling snow on the Carso, thoughts ran deep. Their traces could never again be obliterated, except by as strong a personality, whose heart and experience were in opposition. But there was not such a man in Italy then, or when the War ended. (Those who did not die in the War were chased out of Italy or killed.)

What obstinate creed was being tempered in the furnace of the trenches? First, a love of the plain man, the humble infantry, the peasant turned soldier at a simple unquestioned command, suffering in silence, braving danger with patience if not initiative. The event has made them all one; they have ceased their vaunting talk of their villages; they talk of Italy. The urgency of leadership becomes more evident. Men will not grumble at the great inevitabilities; they will suffer them; but they will rebel at specific wrongs which are or seem to be the effects of bad leadership. And then, the supremacy of the Will over machines, and mere masses, numbers, of men!

"What is morale? To define it precisely, to enclose it in a brief phrase or term as in a command is impossible. Morale belongs to the category of imponderables. (*Shades of Pareto!*)[1] It can't be measured; one can feel it; one is aware of it; one has intuitions of it. Morale is the greater or lesser sense of responsibility, the greater or lesser impulse to the fulfilment of one's own duty, the greater or lesser spirit of aggressiveness possessed by the soldier. Morale is relative, variable from moment to moment, from place to place. This state of spirit which is summed up in the world morale is the fundamental coefficient of victory. Pre-eminent when compared with the technical or mechanical element. *He will win who wants to win!* One hundred

[1] Author's comment.

thousand cannons will not give you victory if the soldiers are not capable of moving to the assault, if they have not the courage at a given moment to expose themselves and confront death. . . . I claim the right to treat of this question because I have studied those who are with me, who share with me our bread, our shelter, our difficulties and perils " (April 7th, 1916).

There is the essence of Mussolini, of the Fascist insurrection and its victory. There, on the reverse side, is the reason for the failure of the Liberal and Socialist Parties the whole world over against dictatorial *coups d'état.* There will always be the victory of a Fascist onslaught unless the will against it is at least as unsubmitting.

On the death of Cesare Battisti, taken prisoner by the Austrians and hanged as a traitor, since he was technically an Austrian subject, he observes how neither Christianity, nor Catholicism, nor Socialism, nor modern Internationalism, had produced martyrs, but that Battisti and men like him had died for their country. Corridoni is killed, that generous character, that ardent patriot, that good friend, that eloquent spirit. What does it teach ? It emphasises again the *popular* character of the intervention of Italy, " the movement of anonymous crowds, not of organised parties ! . . . the people which was for fifty years an absentee re-enters, inserts itself into the living body of Italian history." And then he works himself up into a delirium full of meaning for the future of Italy :

" In this war which is bound to decide the fate of humanity for at least a century ; in this war, eminently revolutionary, not in the political sense of the word, but by the fact that everything is at stake, that everything is in peril and much will be submerged and much renovated, the place of Filippo Corridoni could not be among the lonely and infertile negationists in the name of the ideologies of yesterday, or among the pusillanimous who opposed the war because the war interrupted or disturbed their habits or demonstrated their infinite cowardice. Filippo Corridoni was the spirit of popular intervention. He convinced, affected, he drew people after him . . . We also in the name of our dead, wish to practise the communion of blood. We have gathered the blood which our friends by thousands and thousands have shed without fear and without complaint. It is the blood of the best youth of Italy, Latin blood . . . We look to the heavens. We look to Filippo Corridoni. We have never felt him so

alive, so present in our ungrateful labour. His effigy looks down in silence. But we take heart ; we unseal those lips ; we rescue the spirit from the corruption of matter against oblivion ; we contend with the everlastingness of memory ; we ask of death the cry of life, and we throw it in the face of those who meditate betrayal. We shall not throw off the burden before we have arrived at our goal. The dead must not be betrayed " (October 29th, 1917).

In January 1917 Mussolini was wounded. It was not until August 1917 that he could leave the hospital and limp back to Milan. Mussolini's forty wounds (some of them hardly more than scratches) were an extremely important element in his future success : he could now appeal to the people not only as the " authentic workman " but also as a genuine comrade-in-arms. The wounds seem also to have had an important psychological effect. His career was one in which violence was practised and suffered, and his philosophy one in which violence was not outlawed. The lacerations caused by the thin steel of the exploding mortar, the surgical relief of his fever, supplied him with an abiding figure of speech. Henceforth, he was to worship violence where its application had, in his opinion, a wholesome end, and to praise its uses where it cut away the gangrene. How dangerous an analogy and state of mind when applied to the life of a society ! There is some certainty about the nature of mortified flesh, and the precise use and control of surgical intervention ; but who will have the presumption to judge which of the members of the Great Society are mortified, and then cut off, not dead flesh, but human lives ?

Mussolini returned to Milan, to continue the war from the editorial chair of the *Popolo d'Italia*. Italy's fate was, indeed, desperate. The Russian Revolution permitted the massing of Austrians and Germans on the Italian front. The Italian troops, poorly led by Cadorna, suffered the severest hardships. And they received cold comfort from the nation behind the lines. The neutralists were at home. There were hundreds of thousands of deserters. The manufacturers, the financiers, the contractors, the middling and large landowners, were profiteering. Parliament was not steadfast in a cause which it had not chosen to support. Socialist and propaganda influence were stronger than in any of the belligerent countries. The Pope's peace efforts had a more

direct influence in Italy than elsewhere. The Army suffered a terrible defeat at Caporetto between October 23rd and November 1st, 1917.

The shame, the arousing of the *defensive* instinct, marked the turning point. The spiritual renewal and the material reorganisation marked the second important step towards the Fascist State, the first having been intervention itself. Coming events were predicted in the commentaries of Mussolini:

"To-day the Italian people, as they did in May, say to the men who govern the destinies of the Nation: 'Here I am, I offer you everything: my sons, my money, my hopes, my suffering.' Gentlemen of the Government, history offers you again a unique occasion to take hold in your hands this people unique in the world. Go out towards it! Go out towards its deep masses! Not with abstractions, but with realisations! Touch the cords of sentiment and those of interest! Give to the combatants, and the families of the combatants, the certainty of a better to-morrow. And this people, patient, laborious, tenacious, will no longer know the fatigue of the long Calvary of blood, and it will hold firm with Roman obstinacy until victory is secured. *With this human material everything is possible,* even a masterpiece, when, in the men who have been placed on high by the Nation, there is the spasm of art, and not merely the routine practice of an ordinary job. . . ." (November 2nd, 1917.)

In this appeal the note of desperation is already at a pitch which portends desperate adventures. The experience of the War, and the social claims that it had evoked, continued to excite him, and one can see the growth of the imminent expectation of a social revolution as soon it should come to an end.

"Put yourself in the position of a soldier who has been in the trenches for two years. First, think of all that it means to have been in the trenches, the real trenches, the terrible dug-out where you go down deep into the mud, where you get covered with lice, where you get covered with blood. One day after the other and so on for months, and for years.'[1] . . . We cannot have a difference of treatment and system for those who fight and those who stay at home. Two kinds of liberty, two disciplines, cannot exist, nor two ways of living and dying" (November 9th, 1917).

[1] "Mussolini's own spell of the trenches has been calculated at thirty-eight days altogether, since he spent most of the time elsewhere and in the officers' training camp." Thus de Ambris, op. cit., p. 29.

The Will to Victory and Power. He sees that the *will to victory* is the chief factor of victory. He points out how all armies were forming special little groups of shock-troops and troops of assault to act as " voluntaristic " elements of attack and total devotion even unto sacrifice, " elements selected from the apathetic mass, and ready to be and do something more than the others." War teaches him that to be a warrior is more than being a soldier. He is impressed by the aristocratic principle of selection for special volunteer duty of those who feel the beauty of personal audacity, the fascination of risk, and the taste for adventure. From this train of thought, it is not a long step to the *Arditi, Fasci di Combattimento,* the legions who followed D'Annunzio to Fiume (or the *Sturm-Abteilungen* of the Nazi movement in Germany). Will, will, and will again, is the secret of success ! " You can lever up men as you can lever up inert matter. Human masses have the same inertia as inorganic masses. The saying, ' Give me a point of support and I will raise the world ' is true also, and perhaps above all in the realm of the mind. Our problem is to find a point of support."

He instinctively finds the lever he needs :

" The battalions of those who return will have the cadenced and earnest step of those who have lived and suffered much and have seen innumerable others suffer and die. They will say, and we will say, ' Here in the furrow which leads to the harvest, here in the workshop which fashions the instruments of peace, here in the resounding city, here in the silent country, now that the work is accomplished and our end achieved, we will plant the signs of our new rights. Behind us the ghosts ! Away with the corpses which stubbornly will not die, but infect with the insufferable fetidness of their decomposition the atmosphere which must be purified. *We, the survivors, we who have returned, demand the right of governing Italy,* not, of course to precipitate it in dissolution and disorder, but to conduct it ever higher and higher and always forward, to make it in ideas and works worthy of being among the great nations who will be the directors of the world's civilisation of to-morrow " (May 24th, 1918).

On November 11th, 1918, the victory already a fortnight old, he says : " It is necessary that victory should also realise the domestic aims of the war : the redemption of labour. From now

onwards the Italian people must be arbiters of their destinies, and labour must be redeemed from speculation and misery."

After the War. The men returned home from the trenches. In part they had cheated themselves, hoping unreasonably that the world could be made so different by the mere fact of war. In part, also, they were cheated by the fantastic promissory notes in social reform made to induce them into the trenches. Yet these men were elated with the pride of accomplishment. They had performed extraordinary, unexpected feats—*and had survived*! They had become conscious of their worth. But their elation was soon punctured. The old philistine world reasserted itself. The old routine awaited the returned soldiers. Back to work after so long an excursion! back to society after so long a moral holiday! To murder had been a glorious act, the proof of superior civilisation, proclaimed and rewarded as heroism. For three years there had existed a state of hysteria, alarms, and the keenest type of excitement which life affords—keener than sex, keener than alcohol, keener than sport, keener than the play—taking life and escaping death!

There were causes of dissatisfaction special to Italy. First, the country was made to feel abjectly defeated. The Nationalists who had been ready to fight on the side of Germany and Austria were now fanatically imperialist in their claims for Bolzano and the Dalmatian Coast. The nascent Fascist movement aided and abetted them. The Allies had used them and were now going to cheat them, as witness the treatment of Orlando and Nitti in Paris! No one, least of all these agitators, explained to the Italians that her secular oppressors beyond the Alps had been destroyed. Italy was singled out by President Wilson for admonition regarding the claims she had made to Dalmatian territory, promised her by the Secret Treaty of London. The motives of the redemption of the Italian territories and the completion of the unity of Italy were rebuked and thwarted. The Italian Governments of the day were, in fact, just to Italy and to the outside world, but made the mistake of not being as violent in their defence as their opponents in attack. The Socialist Party screamed "I told you so!" and joined in deriding those who had fought as cuckolds. They advocated renunciation. Bissolati,

the Reformist Socialist who had fought throughout the war, left the Cabinet to work for "renunciation." He was against the annexation of Northern Dalmatia with Fiume, because the population was overwhelmingly Slav; he was favourable to the return of the Dodecanese to Greece, because they were Greek; he wished to leave the Tyrol to Austria, because its people were mainly German. But the Chauvinists said that to be just was to be weak.

The Government had made no efficient arrangements for speedy demobilisation. It had not provided for gratuities to tide over the demobilised until the economic system recovered a new balance and momentum. As the Government had been warlike only under compulsion, it did not greet the home-coming soldiers with joyful parades. The returned soldiers were treated with contempt for having been the dupes of war-mongers; the Socialist workmen and returned soldiers themselves said and felt these things. Furthermore, the Bolshevik Revolution produced a specially disturbing effect on Italy because of the revolutionary anarchic current which had always run through her Socialist movement. It will be remembered that England, steady in the steering of the ship of Government as no other country is, was in a serious state of unrest in 1919, that the police went on strike, and there was widespread talk of direct action and industrial democracy. The Italian State was much less decisive, and far less efficient and energetic, than the English. The leaders of Labour in Italy were excessively doctrinaire, much less practical-minded, much more liable to uncritical enthusiasms and hatreds.

Meanwhile, Socialist and Communist agitation was producing a highly restless and dangerous situation, and it could do this because the economic condition of the country was, in fact, serious; 600,000 dead and one million injured caused a terrible disturbance of family economics, and a large burden for pensions. The swollen war-time industries, material and goods supplies suddenly slumped. Official figures showed 400,000 unemployed in an industrial proletariat of only four million. The internal debt had risen six-fold; the debt of the local authorities doubled; new taxation was proposed. Prices, taking 1913 as the basis, rose, through world scarcity, and domestic inflation, three times, four

times, five times. And there was naturally a wage chase after them! In the circumstances, since employers had had good times, and were now trying to stave off bad, while the workers had been promised better and better times, and taught that they were entitled to them, the result was a series of strikes. Thus there is no doubt that, at this point, Italy needed to follow energetically the policy proposed and in the spirit expressed by Mussolini, *and through Parliament*, if Italian democracy was to be saved.

This allocution of Mussolini's is the key to much that follows until October 29th, 1922. It is, as it were, Mussolini's last word, before he turns his back upon any possibility of co-operation in the old system of government, convinced that, for his aims at any rate, it would no longer suffice. While Mussolini had been in close touch with the people in the trenches and in Milan, the Governments, during the War and after, suffered from one of the gravest diseases of a Government (the professional disease of all Governments whatever their form, fatal unless it is consciously counteracted) *isolationism*. Let there be no misunderstanding: we do not allege that Mussolini arrived at power by acting single-mindedly and purely in the light of this avowal. Nor do we assert that he did not callously abandon its letter and spirit when he became the champion of the middle and upper classes (whether he intended to or not). But, if we are not prepared to ascribe the magical power to him of alone having changed the course of Italian history, then we must be prepared to admit, as the actors in the drama, like Bonomi, Nitti, Sturzo, Sforza, Salandra, and observers like Salvemini and Ferrero, plainly admit, that something must have been rotten in the State of Italy if he could have even seemed to push over a fifty-year-old system in one-half that number of months. The price of a continuation of representative democracy was the price that Mussolini now asked of the existing Parliament. It did not pay it.

"It is already three years that we have been crying to the Government, 'Gentlemen, go out spontaneously and generously towards those who will return from the trenches. Do not be afraid of appearing to be too daring! Be great in your words and above all in your actions, because the hour, the needs, the hopes, the faith are great. And for three years we have been proclaiming the necessity of giving a social content to the War, not only for recompensing the masses

who have defended the Nation, but to bind it also in the future to the Nation and its prosperity. . . . The ex-servicemen are returning. They are returning in twos and threes. They haven't even the æsthetic and spiritual satisfaction of seeing themselves received triumphantly, as would be the merit of soldiers who have literally demolished one of the most powerful armies in the World. . . . The soldier who returns with the intimate satisfaction of having done his duty which permits him to look down upon those who forgot their duty looks for work and there is no work. He hasn't got the money to live on, and it is difficult to get it. In any case it is infinitely sad that men who fired their rifles against the Austrians and the Germans are obliged to hold out their hands for help which may lighten their immediate needs but cannot solve the problem. It is infinitely sad that men who were ready to die cannot find, now that their country is saved, the necessities of life ! Gentlemen of the Government, gentlemen of the governing classes, listen to us ! If you wish we can send you packets of letters which will prove what we assert. Listen to us, Gentlemen of the Government ! To-day that is still possible which would not be and will no longer be possible to-morrow. . . . You must provide. You haven't done so because peace has broken out. . . . Not another month, not another week, not another day may pass ! . . . Don't enquire as you usually do ! Don't wait till to-morrow ! Don't oblige us to turn back to your speeches, to re-exhume your promises, to bring out into the open again your exultation. The soldier who lived in the mud of the trenches believed you. It was his duty to believe you. Now that victory has come, and with it peace earlier by many months, the ex-soldiers ask nothing more than the necessity to start again, to recommence, to begin to live again. Gentlemen of the Government, pass to actions ! ' " (January 20th, 1919.)

Chapter V

RISE AND TRIUMPH OF FASCISM

Foundation of the Movement. On March 23rd, 1919, five days after a tremendous Bolshevik demonstration in Milan, Mussolini called a meeting in a room at the Piazza San Sepolcro (lent by the merchants' association), and with the 145 people who attended, founded the *Fasci di Combattimento*.[1] This was not the first association of the kind. Here and there throughout the country, little bands of men, independent and unconscious of Mussolini, had formed patriotic groups, such as the Association of *Arditi* (storm troops), Anti-Bolshevik Leagues, the Association for Dalmatia, "Italia Redenta," "Italia Nuova." The new organisation saluted the fallen, the wounded, and the ex-soldiers, and declared itself ready to proceed energetically to the realisation of the material and moral demands of the associations of ex-combatants. It declared its opposition to the imperialism of other nations which might damage Italy, and equally to any Italian imperialism which might damage other nations. It accepted the postulate of such a League of Nations as would be based on national unity, and this, as far as Italy was concerned, ought to be realised to the Alps, the Adriatic, Fiume, and Dalmatia. Finally, the workers of Dalmine, who had recently gone on strike and had been congratulated thereon by Mussolini, were again applauded, since in their class battle they had hoisted the national and not the red flag. Mussolini claimed that they were a continuation of the Revolution which began when the declaration of war was forced, and that they would not have been afraid of Bolshevism, excepting that it showed a ruinous result in the country of its origin. The Socialist Party must be opposed *because in essence it is conservative.*

[1] Some say 30 people; some say 40; Bonavita says 145. Mussolini has said 40 and 55. If the *post hoc* number of claimants was counted, there would be many hundreds more than the hall could hold.

" It is fatal that majorities are static, while minorities are dynamic. We wish to be an active minority ; we wish to separate the Socialist Party from the proletariat ; but if the middle class believe that they will find in us their lightning-conductors, they are mistaken. Our device is economic democracy. And let us come to political democracy : I have the impression that *the existing régime in Italy has thrown open the succession*. There is a crisis which leaps to the eyes of all. Throughout the war we heard of the incompetence of the people who govern, and we know that if the war was won, it was solely by the virtue of the Italian people, not at all by the intelligence and the capacity of the governors. As the succession to the régime is open, we must not vacillate. We must run. If the régime is to be overthrown, it must be we who occupy its place. Therefore we create Fasci : organs of creation and agitation capable of descending into the streets and crying : 'We, we alone, have the right to the succession, because we, we were the men who forced the country into the war and into victory.'" (*Le Origini e lo Sviluppo del Fascismo*, 1928, 68 ff.)

He promised improvement of labour conditions ; and *national* syndicalism.

Now began the series of fits and convulsions, the neurasthenia, the fears and violences, which ended only when the Fascists assumed office—thenceforward to continue in another form. As Italy by degrees awakened from her blindness during this seizure, she became surprised at the result. If the country was surprised, Mussolini must have been astounded. His, indeed, is the strangest case of all. For in the early months of 1919, he was a revolutionary Socialist, kept out of power by the Socialists, and at the end of 1922, he had become a Nationalist Dictator put into power by the wealthy ! Events may yet prove that the March on Rome was for him not the end but the beginning. His progress from the one extreme to the other, first followed by Nationalist and revolutionary idealists, and then by propertied gangs, needs explanation.

In early 1919, Mussolini was a Socialist still, but distrusted by all, excepting a few Syndicalist friends. As in the days of Forlì and of the *Avanti*, he inflamed every workers' movement, strikes, agitation for better conditions, occasional seizures of land and factories, assaults on wealthy farmers, trying to foment revolution. In mid-July, 1919, when a widespread anti-profiteering campaign began, Mussolini was in favour of shooting

the merchants and shopkeepers who charged high prices. A few days previously he had written "Let the land belong to the peasants." On August 3rd, 1919, he declared for the expropriation of the land, the mines, and transport. But, like certain industrialists, he was the fierce vindicator of the Italian rights to the spoils of war, and therefore the bitter enemy of the Socialist leaders. This was his general attitude until the beginning of 1921, when he was lifted away by events. The only explanation of his onslaught on the Socialist and Catholic Parties, his violence to the masses, and his championship of interests which have proved a constant embarrassment since then, is that, without riding on the spontaneous movement which surged up, and organising and exaggerating all its qualities, he would have missed the last chance that remained to him of acquiring power. Without this he would have become an entirely discredited politician, or played a minor rôle as the head of an insignificant group.

Until far down into 1921 he was a Socialist, but the Socialist Party despised and distrusted him too much to permit his readmission. He was regarded as an adventurer. It is possible to believe that he was still willing to co-operate with the Party in 1921[1]; it should not have been difficult to win him back in 1919. The Socialist leaders, however, were unable to overcome common scruples and, recognising the exceptional nature of the times, trust Mussolini with leadership. They preached the gospel according to Russia, but they had no general plan for taking power by violence. They could not control the sporadic violence of the local bosses. Hoping for a parliamentary majority, or at least a situation in which they could by themselves form a Government, they refused to collaborate with the bourgeois parties in Parliament, using their strength simply to overturn one Government after another, extracting small reforms, such as the maintenance of a bread subsidy, by the way. The Socialists and the Trade Unions had the cards, the potential majority, and this brought them concessions and a sense of strength which was to the upper classes more terrifying than the gaseous threats of Bolshevism. With a potential majority only, the Socialists

[1] I refer to the truce in August 1921, and Parliamentary declarations made earlier in the year.

refused the path of violence ; but with a decided minority, there were classes ready to overthrow Parliament in order to prevent the Socialist aims from arriving at constitutional realisation.

The main body of the respectable bourgeoisie regarded Mussolini as a trumpery adventurer : Parliament still served them. The Official Socialist Party denounced him as a renegade. These months were, indeed, the months of its triumph. It had the monopoly of the clubs and organisations of the Party (with 200,000 members), the trade unions (with two million members), the co-operative societies, which, especially in the agricultural areas, controlled wages and prices. It had the monopoly of employment. It could paralyse the public services. It held one-third (in 1920 to rise to nearly one-half) the municipalities of Italy.

Mussolini was therefore driven further and further into a murderous fight with official Socialism. He bent all his efforts and employed his choicest invective on showing that the masses were slaves to the orders of a relatively few leading persons, and this by a line of argument which easily led him later to justify the suppression of representative government.

" These play with the masses of working people without ever consulting them. The condition of the Party in relation to the masses is perfectly autocratic, absolutist, imperialist, bourgeois. . . . Who are the so-called Socialists who play the part of shepherds to the flock ? Why do they presume that they, and they alone, are the genuine interpreters, the authentic representatives, of the labouring masses ? and what titles of knowledge, wisdom and virtue can they show compared with the rest of humble mortals? Where is the right and the reason of their Dictatorship ? Not in their brains, which on the average are not superior to the capacity of others ; and not in their heart, which does not contain more *humanitas* than that contained by the other innumerable among the innumerable of human creatures. The title of their Dictatorship is a simple piece of cardboard which is called a membership-ticket, and the ultimate idiot, madman, good-for-nothing, parasite, bourgeois of this world, can get it by joining the Party and paying the small yearly subscription " (May 1st, 1919).

The card they took away from him in 1914 ! the detested intellectuals ! What could he not have done were he then at the head of the Party !

The Class Struggle. There was plenty of inflammable material lying about for Mussolini's incendiary tongue: the international situation, the manœuvres in Parliament, and the class struggle immensely aggravated by the War. The latter was to give him his opportunity. Surveying the forces now swinging into position, what was their character? The War had still further enriched, and had enhanced the social prestige, the status, and the political influence, of the heavy manufacturers, financiers and contractors. The metal and machinery industries, always the favourites of Italy because it is naturally poor in them, had been especially fostered during the War. These great "capitalist" categories were precisely those which in every country at this period were trying to escape from control by Government and Parliament by the "de-politicisation of industry." They were determined to use Parliament as their instrument, as in the English post-War Parliament of (as Keynes said) "hard faced men who looked as though they had done well out of the War," or retain their own power by destroying the political power, as Stinnes and his friends were attempting in Germany. Inclined to their side in Italy were the largest landowners, producing wheat and beet-sugar. The middle tenants and peasant proprietors had been increased in numbers, partly through more extensive agriculture, partly through the power to purchase land which came with more earnings; and they, perhaps even more avariciously than the rest, were resolved to keep their gains. These groups were ready to accept the Giolittian system while it was their protector, but they were not prepared to continue the parliamentary system should it become their despoiler by capital levies, or Socialist reforms. The professional groups and the lower middle-class artisans and shop-keepers and middlemen of all kinds, had no particular cause for solidarity with these, but, as we shall see, had concrete reasons to be jealous and frightened of the rising tide of Labour.

On the other side, the large Socialist Party and the Trade Union movement were swollen in numbers and the expectation of a proximate paradise. There was an outer inflamed fringe which indulged in revolutionary talk and strike activity (fanned, of course, by the insignificant Communist Party); but, soundly and firmly in the centre, were the "reformist" politicians, trade

unions and co-operative societies, in town and country, thinking and acting (to their ultimate destruction, let it be noted) in terms of steady, gradual reform of working conditions, municipal control, and the constitutional rights of the majority in Parliament. It contains the wilder men ; but though these committed occasional violence and acted corruptly in a manner not abnormal in Italian politics, they were acting as individuals disavowed by the Party leaders. Indeed, Mussolini regarded the Party and the Trade Union leaders as *far too tame*, and spent all 1919 and 1920 trying to make them revolutionary. The agricultural labourers and contract-workers, cruelly exploited hitherto, had been promised land by almost all the political parties as their reward, were most cruelly exploited, let it be noticed, in the areas where Fascism later most forcibly reacted, in the valley of the Po and in Emilia.

As the Orlando Government, which had brought the War to a close, eddied around in the financial and social maelstrom, Giolitti and Giolittians came out again. Great mass movements were setting the country in a storm. Not satisfied with the generally proclaimed eight-hour day and the beginnings of social insurance and pensions, the masses set themselves against the reduction of wages, and demanded collective contracts, and, what was monstrous from the point of view of the employers, *workers councils* to supervise their proper execution. In April, May and June, 1919, there were widespread strikes accompanied by violence. The unhappy Orlando fell in June, overturned partly by a Giolittian rebuke that he should have been kinder to the workers. His position had been further sapped by failure at Versailles. Francesco Nitti, a protégé of Giolitti, took office, with a Cabinet strongly Giolittian, and with good intentions. But the Italy of 1919 was no longer that of 1902–1914 : the " piping times of peace " had disappeared for ever. The old personal empirical politics of Giolitti whereby, according to Ferrero,[1] " Thirty million men were governed by thirty persons for the benefit of three hundred thousand families," were now challenged by the formation of real political parties : the Socialists, and the Catholic *Popolari*, founded in January 1919. Both had principles and policies (which was precisely Mussolini's quarrel with them!)

[1] *Four Years of Fascism.*

binding upon their leaders, and both had a foundation in the sovereignty of the masses.

National humiliation at Versailles was suddenly alleviated in a dazzling way by D'Annunzio's expedition to Fiume in September 1919. He held the city for 16 months. D'Annunzio and the serving officers who had engineered the *coup*, were followed by the types who later composed and led the Fascist squads : the sons of the lower middle-class, demobilised officers, patriotic students, dissatisfied clerks, those still waiting for a profession. The action was a hard blow to established government ; it was internationally embarrassing. The Nationalistic Associations, the Nationalist Party, and the interventionists of the upper classes, supported D'Annunzio's action. *The anti-parliamentary action by the upper classes had begun.* D'Annunzio now had the succession in his hands, for a March on Rome was spoken of. Mussolini and his Fasci approved the expedition, collected subscriptions for the benefit of the legionaries, and according to de Ambris, who took part in the expedition, kept most of the money for themselves.[1] They declared themselves ready to rise against the Government if it attempted to deal with D'Annunzio. The Constitution established by D'Annunzio (who had many years previously been a Socialist) had a considerable influence upon the evolution of Fascist " corporative " institutions.[2] The black shirt came from the *Arditi*, the Roman formation, rites, salutes, titles and shouts reintroduced by D'Annunzio were almost at once adopted by the Fascists. So far this was but a flash in an, as yet, very dark pan.

On November 16th, 1919, elections were held, the first since 1913. Proportional representation, which had been enacted by the Nitti Government, was of special importance to the Socialists, who had hitherto been seriously under-represented. They scored a tremendous success, winning 156 seats. The *Popolari* obtained 101 seats and henceforth participated in all Cabinets down to and including the first Fascist Government. Mussolini, an independent candidate in Milan, was defeated *with less*

[1] Cf. de Ambris, op. cit., p. 31 ff. De Ambris was the actual composer of the Fiume "corporative" constitution. He had been one of the most sincere and honoured revolutionary syndicalists. He was a collaborator of Mussolini's until the latter callously deserted his early principles. He therefore died in exile.

[2] Cf. Chapter XVII. below.

than 5,000 *out of* 346,000 *votes*. It was an humiliating result. There were 30 ex-combatant's representatives in the Chamber, but not a single Fascist.

Mussolini in the Doldrums. Indeed, it is estimated by the official Fascist historian that all over Italy there were at about this time not more than 17,000 followers of Mussolini.[1] Of whom did they at this stage consist? Of a small number of former revolutionary syndicalists ardently convinced of the regenerative quality of a revolution against Giolittian dawdle, not anti-Liberal, not anti-Socialist, except in a formal sense, ultra-patriotic, dictatorial, and nationalist, the foes of the middle classes. Of the *Arditi* who could not forget the war, their importance in it, and the use of bombs and daggers; of loafers and professional criminals; demobilised officers dissatisfied with their peace-time status, who had won many medals but no importance or future except as commercial travellers or salesmen; active soldiers; spirited youths; rich intellectuals who feared the workers, and poor intellectuals in a state of economic despair; and a mixture of "patriotic" agrarians, craftsmen, and the rest.

It is interesting to recall the details of the Fascist election programme of 1919.

"*The political problem:*

(*a*) Universal suffrage with regional lists, with proportional representation and votes and eligibility for women. (*b*) Minimum age for voting lowered to 18; that for members lowered to 25. (*c*) Abolition of the Senate. (*d*) The convocation of a national assembly for the period of three years, the first object of which will be to establish the form of constitution of the State. (*e*) The formation of national technical councils of labour, industry, transport, social hygiene, communications, etc., elected by the professional associations and trades, with legislative powers and with the right to elect a general commissioner with powers of a minister.

The social problem:

(*a*) The immediate promulgation of a law to establish an eight-hour day for all workers. (*b*) Minimum wages. (*c*) Participation of representatives of the workers in the technical management of industry. (*d*) The vesting in the workers organisations (who are morally and technically fit for it) of the management of industries and public

[1] Chiurco, *Storia della Rivoluzione Fascista*, I., 56.

services. (*e*) A rapid and complete systematisation of railways and transport. (*f*) A necessary modification of the project of a law of insurance for sickness and old age, reducing the limit of age from 65 to 55.

The military problem :

(*a*) The institution of a national militia with brief periods of instruction and exclusively defensive purposes. (*b*) The nationalisation of all arms and explosives factories. (*c*) A foreign national policy intended to give worth in the world to the Italian nation in the pacific competition of civilisation.

The financial problem :

(*a*) A strong extraordinary tax on capital of a progressive character which should have the form of a real PARTIAL EXPROPRIATION of all wealth. (*b*) The sequestration of all the property of the religious congregation and the abolition of all episcopal allowances which constitute an enormous debt for the nation and a privilege of a few. (*c*) The revision of all contracts of war supplies and the sequestration of 85 per cent of war profits."[1]

Mussolini himself sums up the year 1919 in an article full of despair and gloom. While the Socialists, and the socialising *Popolari*, were in the full-tide of success and D'Annunzio had won glory, Mussolini was isolated and derided. His meditation for the New Year 1920, is *de profundis* but his title is hopeful : *Navigare necesse est, non vivere.*

" But for us, to navigate means to battle. Against others, against ourselves. Our battle is more ungrateful, but it is more beautiful, because we are obliged to count only upon our own powers. We have torn to pieces all the revealed truths, we have spat upon all the dogmas, we have rejected the paradises, scoffed at all the charlatans, white, red and black, who market miraculous drugs to give happiness to mankind. We do not believe in programmes, in schemes, in saints, in apostles ; we do not, above all, believe in happiness, in salvation, in the promised land. We do not believe in a single solution, whether it is the economic or political or moral species, in a direct solution of the problems of life, because O ! illustrious minnesingers of all the sacristies, life is not a straight line, and cannot ever be reduced to a segment enclosed among primordial needs. Let us return to the individual. Let us support all that exalts and amplifies the individual, that gives him greater liberty, greater well-being,

[1] Chiurco, I., 240.

greater latitude of life, and let us combat all that subdues and mortifies the individual. Two religions are fighting to-day for the dominion of the spirit and of the world : the black and the red. From two Vaticans emerge encyclicals : from Rome and from Moscow. We are the heretics of these two religions. We alone are immune from contagion. The result of this battle is for us of secondary consequence. For us the battle contains the prize in itself, even if it is not crowned by victory. The world to-day has strange analogies with that of Julian the Apostate. The 'Galilean of the Red Hair,' will he win once again or will the mongrel Galilean of the Kremlin win ? Will he succeed in the overthrow of all values, as happened in the twilight of Rome ? The questions weigh upon the unquiet spirit of our contemporaries, but meanwhile it is necessary to navigate, even against the current. Even against the masses. Even if the shipwreck awaits the solitary and proud carriers of our heresy."

Evidently disappointed ; evidently Nietzschean ; evidently in some doubt. Would that appeal to the liberty-giving forces ever be more than histrionic self-commiseration ? Yet, at this hour, the invisible powers were reshifting the scenery and re-distributing the parts to Mussolini's advantage. In the year 1920 the Socialist Party threw away their strength through ineptitude ; and the nationalist resurgence began. Both these things led in 1921 to a situation where Fascism arose without the efforts of its founder, and so forcefully that while he pretended to dominate the flood, it actually carried him out of his way—but any rate, to Power.

From December 1st, 1919, to the end of June 1920, Italy was in a state of unceasing disquiet. The Socialists refused to be present when the King opened Parliament, the patriotic organisations held a demonstration of protest. The Socialists answered the injury of some Deputies by a general strike. There followed a postal strike, a railway strike ; a strike in the cotton mills of Piedmont ; and another railway strike in sympathy with the cotton strikers. These main events were accompanied by a continuous round of minor disturbances. There were affrays between the strikers and patriotic organisations, who took their opportunity to make progress by pretending to do what the Government sometimes would not and could not do, namely, keep the services going by volunteer labour. There were clashes between the strikers and the police and armed forces, since the

strikers, especially the railway-men, refused to convey Government help to the disturbed areas. Police barracks were destroyed, especially in the Emilia and Romagna, which were violent in their Socialism. Socialist ex-service men came into conflict with patriotic students. The trouble the workers gave to the police and the Army naturally caused these to react favourably to the Fascists, who helped them. They became Fascist. Peasants and ex-service men occupied uncultivated land in the Romagna and in the South. The Agricultural Workers' Leagues led by the Socialists and the *Popolari* forced the owners and lessors all over the country by terrorisation, boycott, fines, and arson to yield better wages and terms. The Parties of the Left, especially the *Popolari*, were at one in demanding the expropriation of the *latifundia*, and the Government promised a bill. In the background was the Nitti Government, increasing the police forces, and then giving way in the hope that the troubles would solve themselves. Nitti resigned in March 1920, and then became Premier again. What did *he* do ? He doubled the number of the *carabinieri* ; established a force of Royal Guards numbering 25,000. His Government was supported by the *Popolari* and four distinct " Liberal " groups ; he must propitiate the Socialists ; he was harassed by the Conservatives. He again resigned in May, on a defeat in the Chamber, but had to take office again with the same coalition. Then failure to settle the Adriatic difficulties, followed by arrests of Dalmatians and citizens and supporters of Fiume, brought down unescapable wrath upon him, and he stumbled towards downfall. The Socialists forced him to rescind a decree abolishing the substantial bread subsidy established during the War ; and in June he gave way to the only man who appeared capable of dealing with the situation—the old, old, Giolitti. He suffered the same difficulties as Nitti : the *Popolari* wanted liberty of the schools, and a repression of Socialist violence in the North and centre of Italy ; but he could not give the latter out of fear of Socialist strength, nor the former, for conscientious reasons.

Meanwhile, Mussolini encouraged and justified popular discontent, but continued to repudiate Russian and Hungarian models, which were then the fashion, blamed the Government for not efficiently re-organising the public services, even

supported proposals for the co-operation of the workers in the management of the public services, but shot poisoned arrows at the Socialist leadership. He must wait, while his Fasci spread very slowly; but there was also hope in waiting, for he discerned the possibility of a patriotic revival. "Liberals," "patriots," Nationalists, were drawing near; more and more of the *Arditi* were being absorbed. After all that had occurred, after the death of 600,000 heroes at the Front, Giolitti still governed Italy!

The Tide Turns. If the first half of 1920 was disturbed and threatening, the second half saw an exasperation and a final spasm in the occupation of the factories by some 600,000 workers. Industrial disturbances went on apace. There were casualties in the growing tumults and clashes between Socialists, Catholics and Fascists. There were further strikes, of tramways, of dock-labourers, and in some small centres the establishment of Soviets was resolved upon and committees entrusted with the details. No utterance of Mussolini's had been made as yet which distinguished him from the revolutionary syndicalist; he was anxious to see trouble, anxious to see the Governments pass by in their impotent series! Then came the stroke which at once burst the Socialist bubble, and yet so frightened the bourgeoisie that, although the event had made Fascism unnecessary, their fears made it inevitable.

Disputes in the metal industry over wages ended with a lock-out in the Romeo works at Milan on August 20th. The Metullurgical Federation ordered all the workers to remain in the mills. The employers' organisation ordered a lock-out all over the country. In answer the workers seized many factories, principally in Lombardy and Piedmont. This action was against the wishes of the Trade Union Confederation. The factories were organised defensively; attempts were made to get the owners and managers to run them; there were Red Guards and revolutionary tribunals; some student and Nationalist casualties occurred; and there was sabotage and pilfering. Giolitti refused to shoot on the factories. At least one great industrialist asked him to do so, but Giolitti's offer to begin by bombarding his factory was not accepted. His policy was to

leave the workmen strictly alone in the expectation that they would come to their senses of their own accord. This actually happened. The strike broke down ; and subsequent negotiations between employers and employed at Rome under the chairmanship of Giolitti " settled " the dispute.

The episode had some very important moral effects. Any fear of a real Bolshevik menace was shown to be false. This was the time for the Revolution, if ever ; but talk had merely been talk. Yet the agitation and the occupation had been sufficiently frightening, and caused the rich and the middle classes to look to *any* saviour. The weakness of the Governments which had allowed the country to arrive at such a threat, the actual terrorisation of the countryside, the continual strikes, all made the middle classes determine to take permanent and forcible counter-measures against the risen tide of Socialism. But the real Bolshevik peril was gone. The extremists had been tried and found wanting, and support fell away from them. Yet the worst effect of the episode was this, that while hitherto the belief had existed that a constituted authority stood between the propertied and the propertyless, between order and the " subversives," the people now saw that the Government could not be relied on. What was Giolitti's understanding of this new post-war world ? He wrote :

" This episode was to me, under different shapes and conditions, an experience analogous to the *general strike of* 1904 (!) which had aroused so much terror and then revealed its inanity."

1904 ! But the fact was that *property had been occupied*, and the Government had done nothing !

Mussolini himself was still in the position of a revolutionary but patriotic Socialist. His speech of the 20th September must, in the light of circumstances, be regarded as at least a condonation of the occupation of the factories.[1]

" Everything must be changed in the modern city . . . It is possible to destroy in order to create anew in a form more beautiful and great, for destruction must never be carried out in the method of a savage, who breaks open a machine in order to see what is inside. We do not refuse to make changes in our spiritual life because the spirit is a

[1] *Memoirs*, p. 437.

delicate matter. No social transformation which is necessary is repugnant to me. Hence I accept the famous workers' supervision of the factories and also their co-operative social management ; I only ask that there shall be a clear conscience and technical capacity, and that there shall be increased production. If this is guaranteed by the workmen's unions, instead of by the employers, I have no hesitation in saying that the former have the right to take the place of the latter."

He goes on to say that Russian communism is impossible in such an individualist country as Italy ; and that the recent Socialist tour of inspection of Russia had revealed that Russia had failed. Mussolini, indeed, tried to make revolutionary capital for himself out of the episode, and made overtures to Buozzi, the Metal Workers' leader, who would have none of him.[1]

On September 28th, however, Mussolini seems to sense the direction from which his future supporters are to come. This was a *real revolution*, he asserts.

" A legal system centuries old was shattered. Our legal system of yesterday was this : the article labour on the part of the workman ; salary on the part of the employer ; and there it ended."

The worker was excluded from all the rest of industrial activity. But yesterday the worker, as producer, had conquered the right to control *all* the economic process. He agrees with the aims of the Trade Unions to get workers' control. Giolitti's action, once the factories were occupied, was wise. But he should have intervened two months before to stop the dispute. The Government must now act against the Socialist Party, not the Trade Unions. If the Government cannot act, " we invite the citizens and especially Fascists, to prepare with all means to destroy the Bolshevik plans of the Socialist Party."[2]

Although Mussolini took the view then that the peril was not great, and was passing, and although in November he admitted that the situation was improving daily, the shock had been a terrible one for the middle classes. Later, Mussolini had to find an answer to critics who claimed that he had gone over to the

[1] Cf. Buozzi e Nitti, *Fascisme et Syndicalisme* (Paris, 1930), p. 80 ff.

[2] This article in *Il Popolo d'Italia* does *not* appear in the collected works. Why not ? We quote from Chiurco.

middle-classes for selfish reasons. The answer was that he did this to save Italy from Bolshevism. He asserted that even in the year of the March on Rome, "it was false that the Bolshevik or subversive peril had disappeared from the Italian horizon," and that even in August 1922, the Socialist-Communist "Alliance of Labour" had intended to get power by a general strike in the country followed by the King's calling of Turati to the Prime Ministership.[1] This is worse than exaggeration. But if Mussolini thought *this* constituted a "Bolshevik peril," it must have appeared as something more frightful to the middle classes, whom Mussolini had not seldom called rabbits.

What constitutes a peril depends partly upon the facts of the situation, but at least as much upon what people fear. The large Socialist votes in the national and the municipal elections, the great economic organisations over which the Socialists ruled, were, of course, the special peril of people who did not like them. But they had the right to exist; they had been built by persuasion; by a relatively free process of membership; and by the quality of the services they rendered to the workers and the peasants. For many years, indeed, Mussolini himself had been their champion, a fiercer and more revolutionary champion than the orthodox leaders. He had been inciting them to drastic violence. What had he to fear from Bolshevism, except that he would not be its leader? The succession to the Giolittian régime, which he had predicted would be open, would very likely be inherited by the hated Turatis, Treves, Modiglianis, Bombaccis, and the rest.

The Fearful Middle Classes. The middle classes had fears, and these were so great that they were ready to turn even to Mussolini. The shop-keepers could fear the price-fixing and taxing powers of the Socialist local governing authorities; they could fear, as they fear in other countries, the extension of the co-operative societies (the "cads of the business-world," as I have heard them called by one of their upper-class competitors for the trade of the poor). The agrarians could fear the pressure of the peasants' leagues, and the co-operative and

[1] Chiurco, October 28th, 1927. Yet *Il Popolo d'Italia* said on July 2nd, 1921, "To say that a Bolshevik danger still exists in Italy means taking base fears for reality. Bolshevism is overthrown."

credit societies which were taking away their monopoly of employment, and their power to improve their leases and working conditions. They could fear the Catholic *Popolari* who were pressing for distributions of the land. The smaller landowners shared such fears also. The big and small manufacturers could fear a repetition, in time, perhaps, a successful one, of the occupation of the factories. Or, if not that, at least a pressure for more wages and more power for the works councils. The intellectuals with their meagre salaries came to hate the working classes, " the mob," who, in a time of rising prices, had the combined strength to improve their situation while they had not. All their comfortable little world, with its hard won and carefully protected privileges, its security and respectability, was threatened. All could fear weak governments. They could recognise the economic advantages of aggressive and successful nationalism.

The students shared their parents' views ; idealism had ceased to be for them the Republican and Socialist idealism of 1902 to 1914. They were prepared to give it to the working classes and their bloody pretensions ! They were dazzled by their enthusiasm for the " Nation." If they had served in the War, they wanted the political power which had been promised them, and which was now enjoyed rather by the workers who had been against the War. If they had not served in the War, then University and Secondary School youth wanted their share of idealism and adventure now. They had been bred on one theme only, the decrepitude of Parliament. The old men, the sly foxes, the cunning corruptors, were letting the country down, betraying men like D'Annunzio ! Clever, unscrupulous men can very easily take advantage of youth. Look at the photographs of D'Annunzio's Legionaries and the Fascist " squads " and " martyrs." They are *children* ! Such idealism, and the true socialistic ideals of some of the Fascists " of the first hour," has since lived in very great discord with the wealthy and petty bourgeois who made the dictatorship possible.

There were working men also, who, through personal quarrels or conscientious differences or unemployment, had no love for the local Socialist " bosses " and associations ; some were patriotic in a sincere sense. The soldiers and police were troubled by

Anarchist, Communist, and Socialist unrest. The Catholic politicians had conservative leanings, as well as Socialistic intentions. The stream of events was determined, not by the actual nature of the peril but by the hopes and fears of the classes who had seen the peril. (That this is not difficult to accomplish can be seen from the Zinovieff and "crisis" scares in English post-war history.) Mussolini became their agent. He may plead, as he did plead, that he did this in spite of himself; but, nevertheless, he became their agent.[1] It was always in his power to refuse. He is the emphatic advocate of freedom of the will.

By December 1920, he felt strong enough to turn his back on D'Annunzio, who was forcibly expelled from Fiume by the Giolitti Government, acting under the Treaty of Rapallo. With D'Annunzio beaten by the Government, the revolutionary succession passed to Mussolini. But a March on Rome was as yet out of the question. Therefore, said Mussolini, Fascists ought to bow to a solemn Treaty made by the Government![2] It was long before D'Annunzio's followers forgave this. The Fascists made plenty of patriotoid capital out of the so-called "Christmas of Blood" suffered by the Legionaries of D'Annunzio, but Mussolini did not lift a finger to help them. He let them bleed.

The Movement in Sudden Flood. In May 1920, the total number of Fascists, according to the Fascist historian, was about 30,000; by February 1921 it was 100,000; by the time of the March on Rome it was over 300,000. The movement was remarkably rapid. The 35 seats obtained in the elections of 1921 also show a quick burst of confidence in the Fascists. Many of the Fascists were members of other parties, for example, the large landowners belonged to the Conservative Groups, but they regarded the Fascists as an extra insurance—their Party in Parliament, and Fascism taking direct action in the streets!

What then was the cause of their success? Murderous ruthlessness; the deliberate planning of revolution, and, therefore, the derisive rejection of any ethical principles which would impede their success; the connivance of the authorities local

[1] I refer to his frequent criticism of the "dubious elements" in the Party, the "profiteers," and so on.

[2] Cf. *Popolo d'Italia*, December 24th, 1920. *Scritti*, II., 123.

and central; already the *Popolo d'Italia* was being circulated free of charge by the Army for its "patriotic" value[1]; the connivance of the Army, which had received orders from the Government to help the Fascists by a Circular of Oct. 20th, 1920; the fact that the post-war army officers were of the same type as the Fascist followers; the irreconciliable divisions in Parliament.

The Fascist tactics were tactics of saving the country from a Bolshevik peril. The onslaught was partly provoked, and partly favoured by two events. In the Council Hall, the Socialists of Bologna killed the war-wounded officer Giordani. This was the signal for the Fascist advance. Already Giolitti had admitted them into the government blocs for the Municipal elections of 1920; already the armed squads and police neutrality were telling in favour of anti-Socialist forces. From this time the groups began to take the offensive. Who first began the policy of violence does not matter in a country like Italy; what is important is, who took to violence as a deliberate policy? The Fascist groups, aided and abetted by their leader, Mussolini, were determined to overcome the force of national and local elections by systematic aggression, provocation, and then a counter-attack on workmen, peasants, and the socialist and co-operative buildings, offices and clubrooms. In the first six months of 1921 the destruction amounted to 25 People's Houses, 59 Chambers of Labour, 85 Co-operative Societies, 43 Agricultural Labourers' Unions, 51 Political Clubs, 10 Printing Works, 6 Newspaper Offices.[2] There were ugly incidents on both sides. Grandi and Balbo in Emilia and Tuscany were the most energetic and the most ruthless, and lent their aid to the surrounding Provinces. On Sundays, when the Italians are on holiday, a special conflict was waged. Shock tactics were used; officers of the Army led or took part; the police helped or winked at the reprisals.[3] The fighting was the more murderous in the Socialist or Republican strongholds, such as the Provinces mentioned and the Romagna. At first the workers and peasants replied with violence; then they gave this up for strikes; they could not believe in the utter

[1] Cf. Salvemini, *The Fascist Dictatorship*, 1927, p. 16.
[2] Chiurco, op. cit., III., 434. This list is not exhaustive.
[3] See among others Balbo, *Diario di* 1922; Farinacci, *Squadrismo*; Daquanno, *Vecchia Guardia*; Frullini, *Squadrismo Fiorentino*.

ruthlessness of the Fascist fighting squads sufficiently to continue to meet force with force. They relied on the Government!

What did Mussolini think, now that the tide was moving in the direction—the revolutionary and nationalist, but not the socialist direction—that he had so forcefully advocated? "We are not drinkers of blood, nor esthetes of violence, and a thousand times in these columns we have said that of all the wars possible and imaginable, civil war is the one most repugnant to our mind. We have always declared, and we declare again, that we are ready to accept civil war when it is imposed and to conduct it with the necessary energy and intrepidity. The one or the other depends on the Socialists."[1] But he would not let the Socialists alone. He would not leave the matter to the arbitrage of elections. The *Giornale d'Italia* of January 23rd, 1921, talking of terrible events at Ferrara, called them "a middle-class Jacquerie" which "compelled thereto by the State, had thrown itself with great courage against the real proletarian dictatorship."

The Socialist Party, now in retreat, split in January 1921 into two parts, the Communists leaving to form their own independent organisation. The main body, while still obstructive in Parliament, was nearing the point at which it would accept office, since the extremists had been thoroughly discredited. The Nationalists were coming to the aid of the Fascists, either in the squads, or with local flanking organisations. A speech of the veteran Nationalist, Enrico Corradini, on January 24th, 1921, is very illuminating. "The detritus of parliamentarism, demagogic and conservative, was being cleared away. It was a function of our time. It was fortunate that Socialism had degenerated into Bolshevism, because it had provoked the just and magnificent defensive reaction of the bourgeoise." The phenomenon of Fascism "is magnificent." "The bourgeoisie must know how to be the governing class and wish to be the governing class and, with resolution, act as the governing class."[2]

In the light of the flames rising from Chambers of Labour and the Co-operatives and the excitement of killings, ambuscades, and reprisals, what was the Government doing? Giolitti stood

[1] November 24th, 1920.
[2] Chiurco, op. cit., III., 31.

neutral in the contests, waiting for them to simmer down. He attempted to tax the war plutocrats heavily; they looked to the Fascists for help. He abolished the bread subsidy: the Socialists had no use for him. He could have had the support of the *Popolari*, but he was an anti-clerical, and they hated him as an unprincipled politician. He was impotent both before the surging masses and the wealthy men. With a slyness which ultimately over-reached itself, he began to give aid to the Fascist groups.

The Government was no longer afraid of the Socialists. In March the bread subsidy which Nitti had a year ago been afraid to abolish, was abolished, against Socialist opposition, by Giolitti. The arrangement made with the workers to give them a share in the control of industry made at the end of the occupation of the factories was rejected by Parliament. The tricky fellow decided to use the Fascists against the Socialists and the *Popolari*. He armed them with revolvers, rifles, hand grenades, and lorries, and told the police to stand off; dissolved Parliament; called elections for May 15th, 1921; and allied his election lists with the Fascists, against Socialists and *Popolari*. This gave the grace of the State to the Fascists. Giolitti had said, in justification "that Fascismo had become a living force and that it should therefore be represented politically."

The squads were not tamed. On the contrary, they had tasted real blood! The police and the prefectures were smitten with a paralysis in face of the Fascist onslaughts. They were too few, or too late, or too deaf, to understand the pleading of the Socialists, Republicans, and *Popolari*, for assistance against the Fascist onslaught.

This time the electoral programme of the Fascists was not as in November 1919, democracy and the socialised republic, but the "end of the Russian myth," the end of the class war, good conditions for the workers within the "interests of production," "rural democracy, not socialisation." "The problem is to create the governing class."[1] "Faith in the common destiny of the nation."[2]

Some Fascists already suggested that a *coup d'état* should be their object; but whether from conscientious objections, or

[1] Chiurco, III., 180.
[2] ibid., 268.

expediency, Mussolini declared in early April at the National Council of Fasci that if ever there were a moment when a violent action to master the State were thinkable, this was not it, for a violent blow now at the convalescent body of the Nation might be fatal. (To whom ?)

The Fascists were extremely active collaborating with the Nationalists ; they obtained 35 seats, and the latter, 10. The Socialists returned with 34 seats less than in the last Parliament, that is with 122 seats, and the Communists with 16. The *Popolari* increased in strength from 100 to 107 seats. All the rest were Democrats and Liberals of various groups and shades. Giolitti had done well, but not well enough. Indeed he had prepared the end of the Parliamentary régime, for the new Chamber was too divided to keep the Cabinet system alive. The Socialists were all the more non-collaborationist ; the *Popolari* were vowed against Giolitti. Giolitti had legitimised the violence of the Fascists and the connivance of the police. The Fascists immediately made it clear to the Nationalists that common action between them would be on the terms laid down by the Fascists, for Mussolini stressed his republicanism by commanding abstention from the Royal Session.

Giolitti fell when the Chamber put him in a small minority. Bonomi, Mussolini's old enemy, now became Prime Minister with a broad coalition Cabinet including the *Popolari*. The Cabinet was under the rule of Don Sturzo, Secretary of the *Popolari*.

The Last Scruples Overcome. Once in Parliament, Mussolini seemed to falter. There was too much bloodshed. It is true that he had ambitions, and had praised violence, and glory and death, which inevitably impel the young to violence. But Italy was now in a state bordering on civil war. Arms were being brought out of the little stores kept since the end of the War, obtained from arsenals and barracks by Mussolini's young friends. He was prepared to disarm, he said, if his opponents would disarm, especially their minds. Was this sincere disgust ; or the expediency of one who knows that the air of legality is the best cloak for the preparation of a *coup d'état* ? Two months before, during the election, when the armed Fascist bands were

hotly engaged with the Communists and Socialists, when, according to the Fascist historian,[1] the environment was one of "the blood of new victims and the glare of the fires set to the Houses of the People," Mussolini's attitude had been different. He had said in the *Popolo* of April 19th, 1921:

"In spite of all, Fascist violence keeps within the limits of justified reprisals. Certainly these repeated ambushes impose on the Fascists the severest duty of the most comprehensive reprisals. On this field, the Communists will be dispersed and smashed. To speak in such conditions of a truce is absurd. The argument which we direct to all the Fascisti of Italy is very simple: more than an argument, it is a categorical command: never to take, excepting in very special cases, the initiative in a violent action; to eliminate from the history of Fascism, the chronicle of little individual violences; in the case of the incursions of hostile propaganda into hostile zones, to take the most diligent measures of security; in the case of aggression and ambuscades, to exercise reprisals at once crushing and resolute, avoiding its extension to men and institutions not involved in the conflict. We repeat once again that Fascist violence must be equitable, rational, and surgical. It must not become an æsthetic or sporting activity; it must conserve the character of an unwelcome necessity to which one must submit while certain conditions of fact remain unaltered. These remarks are especially valid for Fascists for the imminent period of electoral agitation."

The violence continued. Perhaps the middle classes and upper classes would retreat from this Franckenstein they had raised up? Now the Prefects were withdrawing arms certificates from the workers and issuing more—to whom? Moreover, Mussolini was being worried by some of the more pressing members of the directorate about his republicanism. Where was it all going to end? The tide was taking him to unexpected shores. The Government had, until then, followed the foolish policy of favouring the violence which suited it, whether Socialist or Conservative, and of interpreting neutrality, not as impartial and forceful intervention, but as abdication. It would soon be obliged to interfere, and Mussolini knew very well that a revolution cannot be successful unless the Army is at least passive. Hence, he was favourable to a truce. When the matter was taken up by the Fascist Council in the middle of July, he *supported* the resolution

[1] Chiurco, III., 178.

that, " taking into account the votes of the individual Fasci . . . we consider it untimely, at the present moment, to make any agreement with the enemy and hostile parties," but *local* pacts should be allowed. Then occurred a fresh outburst of fighting, bloodshed, and arson, and about a fortnight after this declaration, Mussolini *insisted* on local pacts, and put his foot down for better discipline within the party. But in the Chamber he asked the Government to favour the Fascists. " I admit," he said, " that the Government is impartial from the point of view of law, but there ought to be no confusion between a movement (the Socialists, etc.), which aims at the destruction of the Nation, and us, who, though desiring all the possible modification of the laws which rule us, to-day represent the guardians of the State."

However, the country was now drifting into a civil war before the Fascists were ready for a general attack on the State, and if the Government had linked hands with the Socialists and the *Popolari*, if the Socialist masses had been resolutely led, there would have been terrible massacres, not all to the advantage of the Fascists. The leader was not yet sure which would take the movement to power—elections or majorities. Therefore he must for the time being declare for the latter. The middle classes must not be revolted by violence. Violence was incompatible with membership of parliament. In any case, there must be legality within the Party. Again, the Fascists could beat down the peasants ; but things were more difficult in the towns, where the factory siren could call the defence forces of the workers out.

At the beginning of August, on Mussolini's persistence, a pact was signed by the Fascist Party, the Socialist Party, and the General Confederation of Labour. This step nearly cost Mussolini his leadership. He took the fullest responsibility for it ; declared that it was admitted that Fascism was his child, and that he had the right to, and certainly would, exercise the obligation of chastising the child, either to correct or to kill it. (*Popolo*, August 3rd, 1921.) He had observed that the national conscience had shown its wish for peace. The wounded soldiers, ex-Combattants (who were anti-Fascist), the mothers of the fallen had clearly declared themselves, and such moral facts could not be ignored by a movement like theirs. Provincial egoisms had better stop, and especially those stupid remarks about parliamentary life in

Rome and the Fascist members of Parliament ! (A Daniel come to judgment !) Expediency required peace ; humanity required it. Was the Nation, even to certain Fascists, to be nothing but a mouthful of phrases, to be renounced as soon as patriotism demanded that factional egoisms should be sacrificed for it ? They had beaten the famous Socialist Party, which had until recently been speaking of dictatorship, to the point where it had asked for a truce. Was not that victory enough ? The Socialists, isolating themselves from the Communists, and disclaiming any connection with the *Arditi del Popolo* (defence-groups established by the Republican Party), had given good warrant of their sincerity, and in the quest of peace had damaged their own future. The pressing question was the elaboration of the doctrine of the movement and its practical applications. " If Fascism does not follow me, no one can oblige me to follow Fascism." There were people who still suffered from the parish-pump outlook that had always harmed the country. The founder of the movement, who had given so much to it, had the right to survey the whole nation in its diverse localities, and say what was for the national good, for his panorama was Italian, European, international. Those who did not possess this outlook might be capable leaders of twenty men in a Fascist squad, but they were not fit to govern a nation !

The country was amazed, and Mussolini was repudiated by the key areas of Emilia, Romagna and Veneto, where Grandi, Balbo, Farinacci, Marsich ruled the roost, in a spirit which we shall presently describe. There was no lack of remarks that Mussolini was playing some double game. In Florence placards posted by the dissidents said : " He who has once betrayed, betrays again." He replied that his motive was simple and firm : he was revolted by some of the recent excesses of the squads. He resigned. Of course, the Central Committee of the Party refused the resignation, and letters of approval from individual Fasci poured in. But the pact could not last.

Mussolini was carried away in spite of himself, for he had conjured up a movement which was uncompromisingly determined to suppress its opponents utterly, to crush what he had called the " Returning Beast," and then to perpetuate its power by the overthrow of the parliamentary system.

Now was the opportunity for the Government which had been the broker in the truce to reinforce its authority. Perhaps the time had already gone when this was possible; at any rate the attempt was not made. The Government did not enforce its own faith in liberalism. The fighting soon began again. The Fascists were determined not to let go. How could they be disciplined? There was no doctrine of Fascism whose ideal content would restrain them. There was only the personality of Mussolini, not as well-known and imposing then as it is to-day; and the young men between twenty and twenty-five, and the crowds of mere youths, and even children, who followed them about with wicked looking cudgels, and rode like madmen on the army lorries.

It is time that we sought the spirit of this time in the Diary of the chief of the Emilia district, the organiser of the largest expeditions, the bearder of prefects, then a student little over twenty, later one of the leaders of the March on Rome, and Air Marshal of Italy—Italo Balbo. Here there is no heart-searching to discover how far one's opponents might be right. Where other doctrines of the State are confronted, and this is very rare, they are regarded not as subjects for examination before their advocates are beaten, but as things to be mocked at. There is no self-communing, there are absolutely no doubts. But stay, there is one doubt, whether the truce should be accepted! Questions of truth and error will be settled by steel or guns. His pages, he says, were informed and justified by one central idea: "The certainty that Fascism, from the beginning, had the destiny of the integral and revolutionary conquest of power. Integral: that is to say without compromise and upon all the fronts of public life; revolutionary, that is to say, by an act of violence, insurrectional, which should mark a clear separation, even an abyss, between the past and the future."

"When I returned from the War—just like so many others—I hated politics and the politicians, who in my opinion had betrayed the hopes of the soldiers, reducing Italy to a shameful peace and to a systematic humiliation Italians who maintained the cult of the heroes. To struggle, to fight in order to return to the land of Giolitti, who made a merchandise of every ideal? No. Rather deny everything, destroy everything, in order to renew everything from the foundations. Many at that time, even the most generous, tended towards

communist nihilism. There was the revolutionary programme already, and apparently the most radical: fighting against the bourgeoisie and against the Socialists, equally engaged on two fronts. And, certainly, in my opinion, without Mussolini, three quarters of the youth of Italy returning from the trenches would have become Bolsheviks: a revolution at any cost! Mussolini deviated the course of events; he gave to fighting youth that programme of radical negation of the present which they searched after, and even more, beyond the revolutionary event, a positive mirage: government by youth, Italy of Vittorio Veneto in power, the Fascist State."

All this was said ten years after. In the Diary of the year 1922, itself, his infatuation appears plainly:

"How can one reconcile the theory of violence with liberal principles? And above all, how can one practice violence and preach respect for all opinions? The truth is one. Who believes that he possesses it must defend it with his life. And whoever does not believe that he possesses the truth in himself, absolute and unique, cannot be a Fascist, that is to say, be contemptuous of death. I am so sure of dwelling in the truth that I cannot understand how it is possible not to be a Fascist. When I speak in public I make no effort whatever. It is as though I were speaking to myself. Now I no longer count my speeches. Propaganda is the instinctive need of the convinced. It appears to me absurd that others do not think like me."[1]

And thus the country moved once again towards unfettered fighting.

From Movement to Party. At this point, even against the views of people like Grandi and Balbo, the Movement was transformed into a Party. A process of parliamentarisation and permeation with responsibility was occurring: a programme, tactics, and a constitution were necessary. Mussolini's was once again the will which moved towards this, and no doubt this was one of the strokes needed to keep the violent within limits and to prepare for an assumption of power. Some integration, some discipline, some connection with the parties, policy, and institutions of the State were essential. Mussolini argues that the fundamental reason for the transformation into a party is that, when a movement proceeds from the contingent, that is the events of 1919, to the transcendent, and assumes characteristics of finality, it becomes a Party. He admits that the contrary

[1] p. 19.

is usually the case, that the transcendent purpose is normally the beginning of a Party. It was time that the Fascist movement was canalised into a defined end. A time would come when the physical reaction to Bolshevism would no longer be necessary. What then ?

The proposal to make a party of the movement was not to the taste of the Emilian group, and Grandi[1] diplomatically attacked the idea in the *Assalto*, the Fascist journal of Bologna (October 24th). He asked what were the prospects of transforming this "voluntary Militia, this species of national guard for the preservation of the liberties of the citizens, trampled on by the demagogic fury of the streets and the absence of State authority, into a political party which pre-supposes in its constituents the precise consciousness of determined ends, a consciousness which is not required of those who act merely in virtue of martial duty." He believed that the Militia would be destroyed without giving birth to the Party. But their job was not yet completed. There might be a selection of the moral and intellectual leaders from among the Fascists themselves, and these would serve as the political guides. In any case, no Party. If integration were necessary, let it be an *Association*, in the true Italian and Mazzinian tradition. Thus the Association would have the political leadership ; then would come the *Fasci di Combattimento* ; and then the Fascist Trade Unions and Employer's Associations. The Fascist spirit would realise and express itself through these three institutions.

Mussolini was determined to found the Party. He asserts that some 80 per cent of the membership have already satisfied him of their wish for this. He says that times have changed, and that in some areas political life is normal. He disclaims any wish or any necessity to touch the squads. On the contrary, they must be strengthened and kept fit for their duty of keeping the peace, since the State was obviously impotent.

"But there will be an internal constitution of the Party, there will be in other words, a *de-personalisation* of Fascism, of which I, in particular shall be pleased. Some demand this, and this ought to be. It is an experiment which must be made. No longer one head, but tens and even scores. No longer individual responsibility—with

[1] Grandi's temper is enshrined in his *Le Origini e la missione del Fascismo*, 1920.

the related hosannas and shouts of glory and treachery—but a collective responsibility. The Party—that tremendous word—means that Fascism gives itself a Constitution " (November 4th, 1921).

A broad general programme liable to be retouched as one goes along is also required. The Party and the Programme will save the unity of Fascism, or give unity to it.

" We know that this development of Italian Fascism will annoy a little those who wish to exploit Fascism to the bitter end. It is certain that many liberals and many agrarians—and other similar sects—will not view our transformation into a Party with any pleasure. But they must reconcile themselves to the new situation. There will end the spectacle of liberal, nationalistic, democratic, and even *Popolari* Fascism : there will only be Fascists. This individuation is a sign of force and life."

The Congress took place on November 7th, and the Party was established. The question of the pacification was still troubling the movement, and Mussolini took the bull by the horns. He would not have the Congress *not* discuss the question. So a special private meeting of the representatives of peace and war was called. They talked themselves hoarse. In the open assembly, Mussolini said that there need be no silence on the subject, but if the assembly wished to go to a vote, then he would do battle all along the line, and the issue would be a vote of confidence in those who had made the Truce. The only plain things that emerged in terms of a programme were pæans in favour of the Nation and a strong State ; that on the question of the Monarchy, the Party was agnostic ; that Fascism was anti-Socialist, *and in favour of the liberal economic system " because we think that the national economy cannot be confided to collective and bureaucratic agencies"* ; that though anti-Socialist, it was not necessarily anti-proletariat . . . and nothing more. So Mussolini had become the agent of the classes who wanted freedom from State control—that is the wealthy.

The Party headquarters soon got to work to attempt to subject the ruffians to discipline. The National Fascist Party must not be compromised by the action of individuals ! A few expulsions occurred. They made little difference. Two years of incitement, and a year of licence are not easily made good. On

November 21st, Headquarters issued a proclamation which said among other things :

" The transformation of the movement into a party is therefore an effort made to fortify and to enclose in a more iron discipline those who wish to be obedient soldiers under our standards of battle ; it is the manifestation of a more decided will to contribute to the work of reconstruction of the country ; it is the necessity of a more precise programme to differentiate and individuate ourselves among other movements and other parties which seek to govern the country. To-day, as yesterday, Fascism vindicates the title of honour which is at the basis of its very existence, and the animating spirit of all its attitudes : We are a voluntary Militia placed at the service of the country. We are for the State and with the State whenever it shows itself to be the jealous custodian and the defender and propagator of the national tradition, of the national sentiment, of the national will ; capable of imposing its authority whatever it may cost. We will substitute ourselves for the State whenever it shows itself capable of meeting and beating, without shameful indulgence, the causes and the elements of interior disintegration of the principles of national solidarity. We shall march against the State when it would otherwise fall into the hands of those who threaten and shake the life of the country." (That is, the Socialists and the *Popolari*.)

At the Party Congress, the Secretary of the Party announced some interesting figures regarding its composition at that date. It was then alleged to have 320,000 members (secretaries usually exaggerate the number of their members). The composition of 152,000 of these was given. Thus :

Commerce and Artisans	13,879	Students	19,783
Industrials	4,269	Mercantile Marine	1,506
State Servants (includes Soldiers as well as Civil Servants)	7,209	Industrial Workers	23,418
		Agricultural Workers	36,847
Employees	14,989	Landowners (including small proprietors and contract-labour)	18,186
Teachers	1,680		

Thus, about 62,000 were " proletarian," and 90,000 independent or professional. Some 54,000 were rural folk, obedient because ignorant opponents of the Socialist workers of the towns.

So Mussolini made a machine more responsive to his touch ; so he differentiated his movement from the Nationalists and the

right wing Catholics, who might otherwise have converted it into a wing of their own in the course of succeeding events and elections. He was now ready for anything: the parliamentary game, on his own terms, but with some concessions to avoid a civil war; or civil war, should his opponents, and still more his followers, make it necessary.

Events now moved rapidly towards civil war. The truce was denounced a week after the Party Congress was held, the pretext being the strike in Rome to protest against the Fascist Congress. The government of Bonomi then began to take strong measures against the Fascists. In late December a circular was sent to the Prefects requiring the disarmament of citizens, the withdrawal of the remarkably large number of permits for the carrying of rifles and revolvers, and action (which had hitherto been neglected) against those who carried armoured maces, cudgels and sticks. The negligence of the authorities in the localities was rebuked as well as publicly acknowledged, to the shame of the system of government under which it was possible. No meetings of armed men in bodies, of any political party, were to be permitted; and whatever their name these were to be immediately dissolved, to be followed by the occupation of their meeting places and the sequestration of their weapons.

This was all too late. The plan of Giolitti and the financial and industrial rich to beat Socialism had succeeded: their plans to tame Fascism failed. The Fascist squads were now too strong, and the police far too intimidated or involved, to stop the tide. The authorities had come to look with positive favour, or at least with tolerance, on the Fascists. Only a wholesale dismissal of the Prefects and their replacement by resolute men, quite as ruthless as the Fascists, could have been effective. Why did this not happen? Because the full murderousness and political intensity of the movement was not appreciated by the politicians in Rome. All parties hoped in some way to profit by the downfall of the various Cabinets. They hoped for some change in policy which would suit their particular set of clients. What was happening was perfect (it seemed) for the conservative and liberal groups. Or they were not awake to the possibility of the complete loss of their liberty to will anything. Even so fine a mind and noble a conscience as the economist Einaudi regarded

Fascism on the land as the rescuer of economic liberalism in agriculture.[1]

No one yet realised that a few thousand unscrupulous men and boys could, if they had the machine-guns and the armoured cars, master a whole nation. The populace in general was too intimidated, or far too involved, or far too afraid of the "reds," or too ignorant, to know that their liberties, if they thought anything of them, were at stake, or to demand counter-measures strong enough to overcome the movement. As Balbo boasted, if you want to put the Fascists into prison you will have to imprison the whole nation ! Though this was but a characteristic piece of megalomania, it had this much truth in it, that the Fascists were the one wilful, ruthless force, determined to achieve their object.

The Socialists were far too paralysed by their own ethics to hit back with the same force ; though this was the only thing that could now have saved them and the rest of Italy. The middle groups in general were hypnotised, narcotised, by this fury whose purposes they could now no longer understand. They kept asking, "what do they want ?" and getting no real answer except that, "if we are impeded we will kill you, or make your life a misery with our tumults"; they acquiesced, saying, "anything for peace!" The policy was to frighten the Socialist and *Popolari* rank and file into acquiescence and to scatter the leaders. The latter was accomplished by onslaughts on the local headquarters and threats to murder. But, of at least as great importance, was the paralysing and dissolution of the Socialist, Republican and *Popolari* government, constitutionally acquired, of the municipalities. This came about by organised tax strikes of the large landowners, and by the forcible scattering of the councillors, or such disturbances that the Prefects dissolved the Council and new elections occurred without guarantees against violence, or Commissioners were sent from Rome to govern the locality.

There was still another step to be taken : it was not enough to break up the anti-Fascist leadership in this way. The Trade Unions and Co-operative Societies must be made leaderless and their hold on the masses broken. This was not difficult. The masses had not created the political movement, or their Trade

[1] Silone, *Der Faschismus* (Zurich, 1934), p. 112.

Unions, into which they had come very rapidly after the War. They had been led into them by a politically conscious and energetic group of leaders: and there had been a certain amount of sporadic tyranny exercised by local bosses. The various categories of workers were already divided among different Party organisations. Thus at the end of 1921, the Socialist Unions contained about one-third of all the organised workers; the Catholic Unions, nearly a third; the Republican Party Union, one-thirtieth; the syndicalist and anarchical, one-ninth; and independent organisations, one-sixth. They were jealous of each other, and battled vigorously to win each other's members. Between the Socialist masses of the town and the peasants there was nothing in common: they were too ignorant politically to resist the Fascist fomentation of differences. They did not realise that they were being used as tools for the rise to power of Fascism, and their own enslavement.

We have already seen that a substantial proportion of the Fascist Party was "proletarian." These were the desperately poor and unsuccessful, the badly paid and unemployed, people from the country and as yet unsettled. By the end of 1921 the efforts of the minor leaders, co-ordinated by Edmondo Rossoni, formerly an anarchist-social organiser of Italian labour in America, had collected a membership of 64,000, of which two-thirds were in Emilia, Tuscany and Veneto. At the Fascist Trade Union Congress of Milan in June 1922, the membership was nearly 550,000; of which 60 *per cent were in agriculture*; about 16 per cent in industry, nearly 7 per cent salaried workers; about 1½ per cent intellectuals; 9 per cent railwaymen, sailors and dock workers; over 2 per cent employees in public enterprises; and nearly 2 per cent technicians.

Rome in Sight. It is amazing to an Englishman, accustomed to English law and order, to read how upstarts like Balbo and Farinacci usurped power. They would order the Prefects to dismiss this or that Mayor, and nominate someone of their own choosing. They would compel them to dismiss uncongenial officials; compel engine-drivers to stop and pick up their squads and take them to the scenes of punitive expeditions. Farinacci forced the Socialists and *Popolari* to postpone

meetings by informing the Prefect that he would only guarantee peace and quiet if *he* were promised the right to address those meetings. He forced Miglioli, the Catholic organiser and member of Parliament, to leave Cremona, his home, although the central Government itself had promised protection. In the end the Fascist strength came from a threat to the peace so determined that the local authorities and the central Government must imprison or fire on them. They had not the resolution to do either. If the constituted authorities could not take action consecrated by law and usage, it behoved prudent citizens of all ranks to put themselves under the protection of the very gangs who set the law at naught. "In a few days," boasts Farinacci, the boss of Cremona, "I made sixty-four local councils resign!"

Fascist organisation and tactics matured. Vaster operations were undertaken. The leaders, mainly former military officers, and some still on active service, swaggered and paraded and defied the Prefects and even the armed forces, who strangely enough never had orders to cope with the law-breakers, and did not think it to be their duty spontaneously to defend the country and the constitution they were serving. They carried out rehearsals for the coming days, when many thousands of men would have to be moved. The authorities were only too glad to make concessions to them in order to be rid of their importunities and threats. This was merely a symptom of the state of mind of all the Conservative elements in the country and in the Civil Service Departments, which supplied the Fascists with important information, nullifying action to be taken by the police authorities and the Army.

Meanwhile, that was happening in Rome which allowed the Fascists to attain power with a simple unchallenged promenade to the capital. Violent scenes had occurred in the Chamber during the debate on the exclusion of the deserter Misiano who had been elected in Turin and Naples. Then the *Banco di Sconto* failed, after the Government had refused to save it, and this and other economic distresses were put down by the business men and the middle classes to the fault of the Government. The Cabinet was overthrown by the secession of a Democratic group, in the hands of Giolitti, said to have been

directed to destroying a bill for freedom to the schools pressed by the *Popolari*. Bonomi complains that the only staunch supporters of the Cabinet were the *Popolari*, while the various Demo-liberal groups were not compact and harmonious. The Government could not therefore cope with the rowdies. He resigned on February 2nd, in order to try to form a stronger coalition, which might put down disorder. The Right led by Federzoni, the Nationalist, seceded because, among other things, the Government was too severe on the Fascists. Mussolini was consulted, like other leaders of parliamentary groups, but it took three weeks to form a Government, since the *Popolari* refused to hear of Giolitti's return. This gave Mussolini the opportunity deftly to broadcast the cries of children beneath the windows of the Prefecture of Bologna : " Dictatorship ! " On February 12th, the *Popolo d'Italia* declared :

" Superficially regarded, the fact certainly does not go beyond the confines of a provincial episode. But the spiritual value is simply enormous. It represents the first public manifestation, *which many more may follow*, of the constantly growing acute sense of disgust which is being provoked by the existing parliamentary régime, and of the vast and no longer unconfessed aspirations of the people for a government which is capable of governing. I was the first to evoke in open Parliament the possibility of a military dictatorship with the connected consequences.[1] I added that on this territory it was advisable, however, to proceed cautiously, because the card of dictatorship was the highest card, which, when once played, would either retrieve everything or throw all into chaos. But to-day in the light of new political and parliamentary experiences, the eventuality of a dictatorship must be seriously considered. The tragic reality may be regarded in this fashion : the Nation, that is to say the *better* part of the Nation, that which does not go to the Left towards demagogic nullity, as some charlatans in Parliament predict, but goes to the Right, towards order, hierarchy, discipline, has been for three years asking for a Government. This invocation has been more or less impassioned or desperate, according to circumstances : but it has always been in vain. There was no Government. There is no Government. The present crisis proves the incapacity of the Chamber to give a Government to the Nation, even for to-morrow. It may also

[1] Author's comment : What a perfect net for the Army officers who were tired of all the recent events and pleased to be so set on high—a military dictatorship, but why military ? Would not plain dictatorship be enough ?

be that the cry of the Fascist demonstrators of Bologna will become to-morrow the formidable and irresistible chorus of the entire Nation."

It would be interesting to know what advice he gave to the King when he was again consulted a week after this article was written. Already the local committees were crying, " Dictatorship ! " As predicted, the chorus had started.

Luigi Facta became Prime Minister. He had been an insignificant member of past Giolittian Cabinets, and was now accepted by the *Popolari*, who burked at Giolitti. He was the instrument of the Conservative wealthy groups. The Government ran directly into heavy storms. It was involved in the Genoa Economic Conference, while the country was racked with strikes in all the Italian ports commenced as a conflict between the old docker's unions and the new Fascist unions, a conflict which the Fascists won. There was a violent recurrence of trouble in Fiume when the Governor, Zanella, considered by the Fascists to be anti-Italian, was expelled. In this exploit members of the Nationalist Party and the Fascist Party co-operated when Fascists from Sienna, Bologna and Trieste, led by Giunta,[1] a Florentine Fascist, took the town by assault. In May there was a specially sensational affray in Rome during the funeral procession of the war hero Enrico Toti.

When it was seen that the Government could not possibly give protection, even if it wanted to, the *Alleanza del Lavoro* was formed of Liberals, the Socialist and Republican Parties, and the General Confederation of Labour. A general strike was ordered in Rome. Mussolini wrote a highly inflammatory incitement to the Fascists—" From this moment consider yourselves materially and morally mobilised." The Government tried its utmost to act against the extension of Fascist action in the most exasperated and mobilised districts of Emilia, Tuscany and Romagna. But Fascist manœuvres extended wider and wider with ever-growing truculence. The regional leaders were already practising their March. For days Bologna was held by Balbo and his men ; and the Government was so

[1] Afterwards at Trieste, to organise against the Communist-Austrian-Croatian movement in Venezia Giulia ; Secretary-General of the Fascist Party, 1923–24.

frightened that it forbad all processions and meetings throughout Italy.

The Facta Government, bespattered with the sarcasms of Mussolini, tottered. Rumours were circulated that the Duke of Aosta, the King's cousin, and General Giardino were Fascist—they were useful in taming the King. On July 19th, the Facta Government fell, when the *Popolari* seceded because the Government had not sufficiently protected one of their members from assault during tumults at Cremona. A long crisis ensued. Mussolini was consulted by the King. *Turati was consulted by the King, being now willing for the first time in the history of the Socialist Party, to form a Government. But the Socialists were divided.* Once again fear of the extremists weakened the resolution of the moderates. Meanwhile the Fascists adopted the clever tactics of giving the governmental authorities a short-time ultimatum to stop the strikes, especially when they were already breaking down, and then the voluntary workers and the crowds of young men did their work, appearing as the saviours of the public, which was only too glad to see the services restored.

No other combination being possible, the Facta Government resumed office to dodder on, until Giolitti should stagger back from Vichy in the autumn! At this point the *Alleanza del Lavoro* realised that the throw was about to be made; they themselves had sought satisfaction from the various Governments and those Governments had been too weak to give it; they themselves had missed their opportunity to be the Government. There was only one weapon left, and that was direct action all over the country in the form of a *national* general strike, a protest against the illegalities of the Fascists, and a defence of political and trade union liberties. But it is also whispered, on high authority, that the Minister of the Interior *provoked* the strike, as a means of setting Socialists and Fascists at loggerheads, in the hope that one or the other, or both, might be defeated!

It was too late! The strike policy had all along merely exasperated the middle classes, without sufficiently injuring the Fascists. The disciplined ruthlessness was on the side of the latter. A serious breach had been made in the Trade Union

system. The strike order was not acted upon by anything near 100 per cent, the only thing that would now have guaranteed the defence of the Constitution. The Socialists had been too long true to liberalism to prepare their followers for organised murder. They suffered the fate of all who have scruples. The strike was over by August 5th.

The Socialists, who had missed one opportunity to enter the Government in 1919, had missed another in 1921. Their most timely occasion for a General Strike would have been at the time of the Truce, when the first great wave of Fascist violence began. Then they could either have demanded protection from the Government or, in its default, organised and armed themselves in disciplined self-defence. They were too long-suffering, and too divided—the nemesis of free men.

The Fascists could now do exactly as they liked. But they must be quite sure of the Army. There must be no hitch. Mussolini took a high hand with the Ministry, offering peace in a none too promising spirit, and speaking in the same breath of the possibility of an insurrection at any time. The essential weakness of the Socialist forces, now clearly recognised, became still more manifest in early October, when the Party, as had so often happened before, split into the two groups of those who sustained the principle of collaborating with ministries and the extremists. Then the worst thing of all happened. The General Confederation of Labour (that is, the Trade Unions) broke away from the Party and declared itself non-partisan. The Party thus lost its hold on the masses, who alone could put up a real resistance to coming things. Finally, the *Popolari* were discredited, and on the defensive as a moral force, because they were being relentlessly pursued by the industrialists and agrarians on account of their favouring a low tariff policy, the parcellation of the large estates, the institution of wages boards, collective agreements, and the rest.

Mussolini prepared the way to power by rebuking Fascists who had treated Nationalists to violence, and by yielding his former beliefs regarding the Monarchy.

"Our programme is simple : we wish to govern Italy. They ask us for programmes, but there are already too many. It is not programmes that are wanting for the salvation of Italy, but men and will power.

There is not an Italian who does not think that he possesses the one sure method by which the most acute problems of our national life may be solved. But I think you are all convinced that our political class is deficient. The crisis of the liberal State has proved it. We made a splendid war from the point of view of collective and individual acts of heroism. From having been soldiers, the Italians, in 1916, became warriors. I beg you to note the essential difference. But our political class carried on the War as though it were the work of ordinary administration. These men whom we all know, and whose very features are familiar to us, now appear men of the past, ruined, tired and beaten. I do not deny, in my absolute objectivity, that this middle class, which might with a world-wide title be called Giolittian, has its merits. It certainly has. But to-day, when Italy is still under the influence of Vittorio Veneto, to-day when Italy is bursting with life, vigour and passion, these men, who are above all accustomed to parliamentary mystification, do not appear to us to be big enough for the situation. It is necessary, therefore, to consider how to replace this political class which has of late consistently surrendered to that swollen-headed puppet, Italian Socialism. I think that this replacement has become necessary, and that the more complete it is the better."

And then for the Nationalists:

"The much-talked-of republican tendency had to be a kind of attempt at separation from the many elements which had come to us simply because we had won. These elements do not please us. . . . Is it possible—this is the question—to bring about a profound transformation in our political system and to create a new Italy without touching the monarchical system? What is the general attitude of Fascists as regards political institutions? Our attitude does not commit us in any sense. . . . A people content under a republic never dreams of having a King. A people not accustomed to a republic longs to return to a monarchy. . . . Now, I think that the régime can be largely modified without interfering with the monarchy. . . . We shall, then, leave the monarchic institution outside our field of action, which will have other great objects, because we think that a great part of Italy would regard with suspicion a change in the régime which was carried thus far. . . . To-day, there are many indifferent to the monarchy who to-morrow would be its supporters, and who would find highly respectable and sentimental reasons for attacking Fascism, if it had dared to aim at this target. I do not think that the monarchy has really any object in opposing what must be now called 'the Fascist revolution.' It is not in its interest, because by doing so

it would immediately make itself the object of attack, in which case we would not spare it, because it would be a question of life and death for us. Those who sympathise with us must not withdraw into the shade ; they must stay in the light. They must have the courage to remain monarchists. The monarchy represents the historical continuity of the nation ; a splendid purpose, of incalculable importance."

The Arrow Must Fly. Matters had now reached a very difficult state. The daily unrest and killings and burnings could not continue without a revulsion of feeling among those people who had not been unwilling to see the Socialists get a thrashing. As Mussolini saw, a not inconsiderable number of the Fascist exploits were causing a moral reaction. If the existing governmental situation remained, weak as it was, it might be fortified by the accession of new strength from the elements to whom so much continued unrest would cause annoyance. What was to be done ? The longer they waited the more had they to fear, as an outside possibility, that their enemies might make common cause. Should they embark on the final stages for a *coup d'état* ? There was very great danger in that course also. For, though they might be quite sure that the bundles of diversities called Fasci would respond at ordinary times to orders, were they absolutely sure that when an actual revolution was in question differences of motive for entering the Fasci might not find an untimely expression, and the revolution misfire ? The Fascists of Florence, for example, had been so rebellious that in the April of that year the National Council had had to decree the dissolution of the organisation. Again and again Mussolini and the other leaders were being compelled to rebuke improper violence—" little, sporadic acts of violence," " defiled violence," violence which had become " a sport "—and seek the purification of the Party. For all the talk and bombast by the younger Fascists, older men like Mussolini realised the immediate perils, and realised also that there is no returning from the path of revolution, that the task of permanently going forward in the path broken by the revolution is imposed upon its authors, and that that is no light task, either domestically or internationally. Mussolini was continually harassed by elements he detested.

Yet something had to be done ; the two or three hundred

thousand followers had been led to expect something ; and both in Fascist councils and in public the alternatives were put. Either give us an election, or we shall be forced to take power by an insurrection, whatever the consequences ! A revolution can't be kept simmering, it must cool or boil over ! The Government were plainly informed of the alternative both in Parliament and by direct talks between the leaders. At the end of September, indeed, the Fascist Council had resolved on insurrection if necessary ; and about October 2nd Mussolini had already drafted the proclamation of the March on Rome.

The tension grew greater ; it became less and less possible to hold in the cudgel-bearing squads. On October 1st, indeed, Mussolini had to agree to their forcibly occupying Bolzano, the disputed area of the Trentino, still in the Austrian hands. On October 6th, in a speech at Milan, Mussolini expressed the growing tension in his Party and in himself :

" The *Corriere della Sera* says that something must be done quickly and we agree. A nation cannot live nursing in its bosom two States, two Governments, one in action and the other in power. But what is the way to give the nation a Government ? I say Government, because when we say State, we say something more. We mean the spirit, and not merely the inert and transitory form. There are two ways, gentlemen. If the whole of Rome were not suffering from softening of the brain, they would summon Parliament at the beginning of November, and having passed the Bill for Electoral Reform, make an appeal to the electors in December. Because the crisis for which the *Corriere* asks could not alter the situation. Thirty crises in the Italian Parliament, as it is to-day, would mean thirty reincarnations of Signor Facta. If the Government does not follow this path, gentlemen, we shall be obliged to take the other. You see that our tactics are now clear. When it is a question of assaulting the State, it is no longer possible to have recourse to little plots, of which the to be or not to be remains a secret to the last. We must give orders to hundreds of thousands of men, and it would be merely absurd to keep it secret. We play an open game."

Now Mussolini was evidently in the mood for the latter course, for his speeches were full of odd threats. He would chastise the proletariat which was wrong-headed ; he would chastise the bourgeoisie which was infected ; he would offer no such liberty as that which would overthrow *his* régime ; he would be severe

and reactionary; he gave no promises; he was no missionary bringing revealed truth. There is no doubt about the resolution in this speech. "I do not think that our enemies will place serious obstacles in our way." The Government itself was ready to offer the Fascists a place—Under-Secretaryships, and Ministries without Portfolio. The Fascists demanded the Ministries of War, Marine, and Public Works.

On October 18th, a Quadrumvirate was nominated to assume full powers under Mussolini at the beginning of the revolutionary assault: Bianchi, Balbo, De Vecchi, De Bono. The 21st was suggested for the coup. A delay was advised to make sure of the preparations, and, at least, to conciliate the South which until this time had been entirely cool, even as it had been unconcerned about so many of the vital political events in Italian history. It was therefore decided to hold a great convention at Naples on the 24th, the General Staff meanwhile proceeding with the plans of mobilisation. Something like 50,000 Fascists from all over Italy invaded Naples; and Mussolini gave his final offer and adieu to the old system of government.

"The moment has arrived, in fact, when the arrow must leave the bow, or the cord, too far stretched, will break. . . . We Fascisti do not intend to arrive at government by the window; we do not intend to give up this magnificent spiritual birthright for a miserable mess of ministerial pottage. . . . It is not a question of patching together a government with a certain amount of life, but of including in the liberal State—which has accomplished a considerable task which we shall not forget—all the forces of the rising generation of Italians which issued victorious from the War. . . . As a matter of fact, at turning-points of history, force always decides when it is a question of opposing interests and ideas. This is why we have gathered, firmly organised and strongly disciplined our legions, because thus, if the question must be settled by a recourse to force we shall win. . . ."

He then paid his respects to the Monarchy and the Army.

"We are all for pacification, and we should like to see all Italians find a common ground upon which it is possible for them to live together in a civilised way. But, on the other hand, we cannot give up our rights and the interests and the future of the Nation for the sake of measures of pacification that we propose with loyalty, but which are not accepted in the same spirit by the other side. . . ."

The Government was simply unable to understand the situation. Even now a whiff of grapeshot would have saved constitutional liberties. Facta could not be persuaded that the Fascists meant what they threatened.[1] But *no one* seemed to realise the gravity of the issue. And the question arises, did Mussolini himself understand its gravity? He said again and again that they aimed at commanding the State. Yet, on the other hand, he is perfectly prepared to accept a number of portfolios in the Government. Or, he is ready for a dissolution and elections, with the certain knowledge that if there were elections under the existing system, before he was actual dictator, he would still be in the liberal State, his power founded upon a liberal basis, with other parties practically certain to be, all told, in a large majority.

Was there more in his mind now than a March on Rome? Was not the "Revolution" an afterthought? If it were an afterthought to him, how could it be a reality as certain as he proclaimed it to be only some four or five years later? No real revolutionist will be content with elections, unless he is sure that the elections will give him an overwhelming majority or the close possibility of one. And Mussolini was not sure. The situation itself was against it. The Government was strong enough to refuse him what he wanted; but it was not strong enough to withstand his "legions," though these did not know what they ultimately wanted.

And so the movement on Rome was ordered for the 26–27–28th, in such stages that by the morning of the 28th all power should be in the hands of the Fascists. The military entourage pressed the King to form a Government quickly, and threw him into a panic. Even then the idea that Mussolini should be Prime Minister was considered scandalous by normal parliamentarians. After all, the whole of the Right (including Nationalists and Fascists) only numbered some 50 out of 535. Then the mobilisation must go ahead! On the evening of the 26th, under Fascist pressure, the Ministers offered their resignation to Facta. Under further pressure on the 27th, the Cabinet resigned. Then the Fascists issued their proclamation and began action. Mussolini prudently remained in Milan, over 400 miles from Rome. The

[1] Cf. Sforza, *Makers of Modern Europe*, "Facta."

Government, whose resignation had not yet been accepted, now in permanent session, decided to proclaim a state of siege, as from noon on the 28th. Fascist forces were already in occupation, or well on the way to occupying, the various local government, police, railway and telephone and telegraph centres from the North of Italy southwards towards Rome. When the moment came the King refused to sign the proclamation of the state of siege. It had been refused early on the morning of the 28th, for even earlier than Facta himself, the Intendent General Ernesto Civilli (at 7.30 a.m.) had explained the situation (not with accuracy as to numbers) to the King—that 70,000 Fascisti were closing in on Rome. The King persisted in his refusal, despite the fact that the Prefects and newspapers had been informed by the Cabinet.

Thus the Fascists simply walked past the surprised and discomfited authorities. Their opponents were divided and irresolute. On the 29th, a few thousand were seeping into Rome. The Cabinet had legally and properly taken measures of defence. But the Fascist Directorate at Rome were in negotiation with the King. A Salandra-Mussolini Government was proposed. Mussolini refused. Nothing less than first place could now be justified. On the evening of the 29th, the King called him to Rome. Mussolini crossed the Rubicon in the Milan-Rome *wagon-lit*, and a bowler hat. The latter was shortly afterwards replaced by the traditional silk topper.

The next day the first Fascist Cabinet was formed, and the foundation of the dictatorship was laid. The considerable number of non-Fascists included in the Cabinet were ejected as Mussolini increased in strength; and his office allowed him to permeate the local authorities with his trusted men, and to take the initiative with conspicuous gestures which won him further support. The Army, the railways, posts and telegraphs, the Crown, were now his: if he had already done so much without these instruments, what could he not do now, seeing that he was that awe-inspiring institution, the State? Henceforth his will could be frustrated only by a revolutionary force at least as disciplined, spirited, and ruthless as his had been and continued to be. The King was the Fascists' last obstacle. Why did he let them in? If he had accepted martial law his Army might not have obeyed him. If the Army had obeyed him, there would have been

serious bloodshed, and in the event of Fascist success he would have hardly been able to remain on the throne. As a matter of fact, some days before the March, the Queen Mother, who was on holiday at Bordighera, had probably known all about Fascist plans and strength: for the Quadrumvirate met her while they were preparing their plans in the same town.[1]

What was the March on Rome? Step by step the *coup d'état* was converted into a dictatorship. When Mussolini first met Parliament as Prime Minister he said (November 16th, 1922): "I make this appearance as a purely formal act of courtesy . . . I decided against pushing my victory too far. I could have exploited it to the end. I could have made of this hall, dark and grey, a bivouac for my squads." Against this there was no revolt on the part of the Assembly. It was the promise that should opposition arise, it would be finally dispersed and smothered. It need not have come to this except that the same ineptitude which opened the succession to Mussolini continued to weaken and divide his opponents, to bring ridicule on them, and to lay open the way for their total dispersal or destruction. The March on Rome was only a March on Rome, and neither in fact nor in intention the conscious beginning of a dictatorship and a "continuing revolution." It was the lack of opponents as capable as himself that made it possible for Mussolini to clear all opposition, and all the liberties which are its foundations, out of his way.[2] Mussolini was pressed to do away with all liberties by the nature of his advent to power; each step in violence imposed the next; and being obliged to go on because he could not go back he set himself to create a doctrine which as yet he lacked, to clear his opponents out of his path, and to remodel the institutions and transform the mind of the nation.

How can his situation at the moment he took power be described? What had happened? A handful of disinterested idealists of national and syndicalist faith had banded themselves together to effect a national recovery from middle-class decrepitude, incompetent parliamentarism, national defeatism, and

[1] Balbo, op. cit., p. 185.

[2] It is my belief that Italy suffered from the loss in the War of men between thirty-five and forty-five who were old enough to be steadying forces of the adolescents, and vigorous enough to strengthen Parliament.

communistic and anarchistic propaganda. They were led by a man of no ordinary political talent, whose social criticism was sharpened, and whose native impetus increased, by the fact that his own political future could hardly be inside the official Socialist Party. Gradually, through the propaganda of the *fasci*, but much more through the spontaneous resurgence of nationalist feeling stimulated by Fiume and international affairs, and wild panic at the so-called Red Menace, considerable numbers of the population, but more especially of the very young men who had nothing to lose but their boredom, joined this small group, and after a time involved it in policies and methods which it had not invented and at times decidedly denounced. Towards the disinterested national salvationists, there flowed large numbers of adherents who sought the safeguard of their economic interest; they regarded them as their prize-fighters, and gave them moral, and what was more urgent, material aid. At a certain point the leader had been pressed, partly by the insurrectionary energy he himself had generated in his bands of cudgel-bearers, too far forwards to retreat, for retreat would have meant political effacement. He tried, to his credit, to stem the tide of violence, by resignation. It was too late. His followers had tasted blood and power; his opponents, at last alarmed, might start a fight *à outrance*. Then came a time when he must either abdicate altogether, accepting the suppression of his movement by the Government and the Socialist, Popular and Republican Parties, or take the Government by force. He did the latter; and his success was made certain by the division of the forces arrayed against him, the connivance of the Crown, the part passivity, part friendliness, of the Army, a lack of pride in the population, and the tying of the hands of his opponents, who had neither the murderous and incendiary brutality of some of the attackers, nor a political doctrine which would justify their use of intolerant and ruthless force. They believed in the whole nation, not excluding their opponents; Mussolini believed only in his own conception of the nation. They were long-suffering; his loyalties were fiercer because they were narrower. They offered the other cheek; he came with the cudgel.

What had occurred? The most capable and forceful politician in Italy, who had began his political career as an anti-bourgeois,

had headed a revolt of adolescents drawn mainly from the bourgeoisie, because he and they said that the Socialists and Communists were a peril. He was anti-monarchist, but he rallied to the Monarchy because he preferred to attach to himself the loyalties that would have been aroused in its defence if he had attacked it. He had been hostile to militarism and the Army; he now became its friend and flatterer, because he could not successfully revolt against its hostility, because it had served Italy well in the War, and because he knew that an Army, always necessary to a Government, is especially indispensable to a dictatorship. He originally believed himself to be an internationalist, but then became violently nationalistic out of disgust at the treatment of his own countrymen by foreign Powers and foreign *workers*, and the selfish policies pursued by other nations to the disadvantage of Italy, and the connivance of Socialist movements therein. Originally the vindicator of the political liberty, he now became its suppressor, because he craved to govern and the régime of liberty offered him no early hope, and because liberty had permitted both Communist excesses and permanent weakness in the parliamentary-cabinet system. A ferocious anti-clerical, he now disavowed this attitude to obtain Catholic support. An ardent Socialist, he became the flail of the proletariat because his allies expected it, and because it followed the Socialist and Communist leaders he hated. . . . All these twists and turns were essential to the acquisition of power. Either this or abdication; and his instincts were all against abdication. But some of these apostasies were expedients, and the bourgeoisie who provided the money, and who had distrusted him until the wild panic which he had in large part fomented made them lose their heads, may yet have good cause to rue their choice of a champion. Most of them identified the nation with their own private fortunes; but their loyalty and monetary contributions could not engage their champion for ever. Concessions and seeming engagements were the cash price of power. His career was the most certain guarantee that once he were properly established in power he would be the enemy of the bourgeoisie and the friend of the proletariat. Being in power, the leader of his nation, he needs the monarchy, he needs the armed forces, he needs, as much as he instinctively

feels, the transcendency of the Nation above all classes, groups, individuals, creeds, and its diplomatic value in the unhappy family of nations. His future policy and doctrines would not be determined by the attitudes and exaggerations needed to acquire power, but by his original instincts and fundamental character moulded by his experience. Yet that policy must needs be affected by the political friends who now flocked to his side, and particularly the Nationalist Party, which, under Signori Federzoni, Corradini and Rocco, came over in a body in early 1923. These were to have such an influence upon Mussolini as justifiably to arouse the suspicions and protests of his earliest followers, and he was finally obliged to declare (July 22nd, 1924) that they were wrong who thought Fascism to be composed only of ex-Nationalists. " It may be said that Fascism, save for the new recruits, is entirely composed of ' ex's.' " A very interesting definition of Fascism ! Nevertheless, as we shall appreciate in the course of discussion of the political and social theory of Fascism, the methods used for the permanent suppression of the opposition, and the State control of economic associations, the preponderant influence has in fact been exerted by the ex-Nationalists.

. . . . . .

Was Fascism in Italy inevitable ? It looks as though it were the product of an unbroken deterministic chain : economic contradictions, political confusion, parliamentary weakness. Trotsky would give little credit to the will and power of individuals. Yet Fascism seems to me to have been avoidable if Mussolini had not functioned as he did, to aggravate the economic tension, to make political confusion worse confounded, to enter Parliament only to decide to overthrow it. His will to power, and the ruthlessness in its realisation, alone made Fascism *inevitable*, even as it now continues to make it possible.

Was Fascism a Revolution? I think it was not. For I define a Revolution not merely as any violent overthrow of existing politicial institutions, but only as such which has for its object the greatest liberty and equality for the greatest number. To

such an outlook, as we shall now see, Fascism has a strong antipathy. As we shall also see, there are forces, domestic and astir in the world at large, which may make Fascism change direction.

Part III

The Fascist View of Society and Politics

Chapter VI

THE INDIVIDUAL AND SOCIETY

Once in power Mussolini felt that the Fascists must formulate a doctrine of the State. They had arrived in power on several re-inforcing waves of emotion and appetite, and now felt the need of ideas to justify what they had done and what they still had to do. The honest De Stefani records :

"What had happened on the 28th October? A revolution or a counter-revolution? Of what nature was the flame we had lighted? The phantasms evoked by words change. Fascism was a sentiment. We may give it a simple name : love of country. The attributes of this love are simple : love, concordant, obedient, laborious. We had no encyclopædists. It was a movement as free as youth ; unforeseeable in its trajectory as a life just born ; as diffuse as primitive sentiments. I did not feel the travail of principles. . . . Also around us there crowded many who had stolen from the faith the fascio of birch and ash and had bought a black shirt for twopence."[1]

Practical answers could not be given to emergent problems without a substratum of general values. The whole country may be plastered with the injunctions : "Believe ! Obey ! Work ! Fight ! " but people cannot stop thinking, nor will the total population continue to bear taxation and interference with its habits and work in return for nothing but a row of magniloquent vapidities. After the blinding excitement of revolutionary action, Fascist ministers and magnificos, hundreds of thousands of Blackshirts, and millions of workaday citizens, demanded sober reasons for continuous obedience. Nor was this all. A highest common measure of principle had to be distilled from the vague and raw fuel of the movement, on pain of a homicidal struggle

[1] Gutkind, *Mussolini e il suo Fascismo* (1927), p. 309.

for supremacy within the party. No sooner had Mussolini arrived in Rome than a struggle broke out between orthodox and "dissidents," "Mussolinians" and "Fascists." The outer world had to be placated and persuaded. Above all, the singular conclusion was reached that the future generation could hardly be made Fascist unless the Fascists knew what Fascism was! Finally, Mussolini had innate longings to be the Philosopher King. What theme, indeed, is more recurrent in his works, than the power over men of Moses, Mahomet, and other such leaders? After many denials of the need for a doctrine and a programme, denials indispensable to the strategist who was skilfully adapting his politics and companions to changing objectives, he confesses that the empire of the Idea is more enduring and extensive than the kingdom of the Deed.

As the answer to these various needs, what are we given? There are many formulations by the secondary stars in the Fascist firmament: professors, journalists, and ministers have written not a little, and publishers are grateful. But the most authoritative constructive attempt is Mussolini's own. This is to be found in his article in the *Enciclopedia Italiana* published in 1932. Of course, the complete understanding of Fascism requires that we should know how far the common people, and especially the leaders of Fascist thought and politics, agree or disagree with the ideas expressed in this Essay. But such an enterprise would blur the features of the contribution which has more chance than any competing version of actual application, and it would be an impossible task also because everybody in Italy assumes the right to say Yea or Nay as to details, the more so because any challenge on principle would not be altogether healthy for the challenger. Mussolini is Fascism; his words are Holy Writ. As the writer of a popular catechism has it: "*Mussolini ha sempre ragione!*": "Mussolini is always right!" How far they are not merely his thought, but other people's behaviour, will become plain, I hope, when I deal with Fascist Institutions. There is, besides Mussolini's Essay, another partial statement of the Fascist doctrine in the "Charter of Labour"; but the Essay, though not including this verbatim, does include its essence.[1]

[1] Cf. Chapter XVII. below.

Mussolini's Essay consists of two parts: one part called *Fundamental Ideas*, and the other called *Political and Social Doctrines*. The first part is a condensed abstract statement of the second; if anything at a deeper level, and more comprehensive. It is also shorter, and lends itself better to reproduction and analysis. I quote Mussolini's *Fundamental Ideas*,[1] in heavy lettering, breaking off at each important point to subject the propositions to the frank analysis which the student is accustomed to apply to the ideas of political philosophers like Plato, Hobbes, or Montesquieu. His other writings and speeches should be compared with his *Fundamental Ideas*, and this is done where it appears useful as illustrative of the evolution of his thought. Constantly also we examine the soundness and genuineness of the doctrine in the light of actual life in the Fascist state as recorded in the history of the last twelve years.

Practical Value of the Doctrines. Some general observations may well precede this task. First, as the Fascists themselves are fond of saying, anything that the leaders accept or promise to-day may properly be thrown overboard to-morrow if the leaders, wise with the wisdom of philosophers, and omniscient in their central, all-surveying station, and contact with the technical experts, so decide. Hence, in time to come even these apparently firm principles may not be Fascism. Even these may be one more instrument of domination without the virtue of principle, to be scrapped as soon as the elation, the applause and the needs of the moment are past.

Secondly, careful reading of Mussolini's attempt at construction shows that, like many others, he is far better able to destroy other people's doctrine than to make a tenable and consistent one of his own. It is, as a matter of fact, as easy to shake a man's political philosophy as it is to disturb his religious faith. It is extremely difficult to establish another which shall be freer of flaws than those that have been confuted. For all philosophies, all religions, rest finally on acts of faith in things we cannot understand, the reading of inscrutable signs in the

[1] The *Enciclopedia* article is separately reprinted, with notes, and an account of the rise of Fascism by Professor G. Volpe. Publishers, Treves, Milan and Rome, 1933.

depths within us and the vast spaces without. Men can very easily be made to doubt their readings, for it is not difficult to confront them with readings or facts not yet included in their little schemes. Who shall supply a sounder one? Mussolini? These considerations would lead rather towards the utmost possible tolerance for all the rival accounts of human character and destiny. Now while I may accept many of the propositions taken individually, they may yet be harnessed to a central theory or tendency which I think is pernicious. This is so in the present case. Mussolini has learning and psychological penetration; many of his remarks are shrewd and true; but I think the whole design is not one for good living or, as he demands, for cheerful dying.

Finally, the most able and comprehensive philosophers of Fascism after Mussolini, are Giovanni Gentile and Alfredo Rocco. Gentile's little works on "What is Fascism?"[1] and "The Origins and Doctrine of Fascism,"[2] and other writings came before Mussolini's Essay. So did Rocco's "The Political Doctrine of Fascism,"[3] and "The Transformation of the State."[4] It would be interesting to know how much Mussolini owes to Gentile. Comparative examination of the Fundamental Ideas show marked traces of Gentile's influence, even to similarities of phrase: and this is a good sign for the future of Italy. The debt to Rocco is as weighty on its practical side as it is full on the spiritual. And whereas Gentile taught an idealism which soars above the Nation and includes individual self-development, Rocco taught Nationalism which makes the Nation paramount over the individual and in international relations. There is charity in Gentile's teaching, and misanthropy in Rocco's. The latter has triumphed.

THE DOCTRINE

"Like every sound political conception, Fascism is practice and theory; action in which a doctrine is immanent, and Doctrine which, arising out of a given system of historic forces, is inserted therein and operates upon them from within."

Fascism is from this point of view neither better nor worse than any other political system. It is not true that there was a

[1] *Che cosa é il fascismo*, 1925. [2] *Origini e Dottrina del Fascismo*, edn. 1934.
[3] *Dottrina Politica del Fascismo*, Perugia, 1925.
[4] *La Trasformazione dello Stato*, 1927.

premeditated doctrine. Fascism as a movement did not proceed from a reasoned view of the State, nor were its aims and methods governed by pre-determined criteria. In this it differs from Bolshevism, which began with the doctrines of Karl Marx brought up to date. As past chapters have shown, there was no clear consciousness of a doctrine; none was formulated; no deliberate attempt was made by the leaders grouped around Mussolini to agree upon one. Indeed, trouble was taken to avoid this. At the most the Fascists were united in a conspiracy of ardent negations.

> **"Therefore it has a form correlative to the contingencies of place and time, but it has also an ideal content which raises it to a formula of truth in the higher level of the history of thought."**

It is perfectly true that Fascist principles have changed with contingencies. This is not unreasonable, for those who seek to realise their doctrines without regard to the nature of men and the environment do damage to both. Some empiricism is essential, and *all* systems of government acknowledge this. As to the truth of Fascism, any principles, even Fascist principles, elaborated in the course of time, necessarily become part of the history of thought. There is a philosophy inherent in actions, for, as William James taught long ago, our innate dispositions force us to believe, and we are thus impelled to act. (But if in our actions only and not through the control of the intellect it is apt to be as confused and raw as any animal's.) Their essential character merely becomes more apparent, more articulated, as the number of actions extends over a longer time and a more comprehensive range of circumstances.

Whether the result can be called "truth" is another question. Indeed, what is the word "truth" doing here? By its use Mussolini is trying to convince others, and himself, that there is an absolute transcendent value in his creed. Having regard to the general philosophy of the Fascist movement, and the teaching of Mussolini's own teachers, how can he hope to maintain this? He has simply discovered the need of supplying a dogma, to give moral justification to his power and thus to convert power into authority. Whether his has the permanent satisfying power of truth depends not upon his claims, but upon the value set upon it by those who have to obey its commandments.

> **"It is impossible to act spiritually in the world as a human will dominating the will of others without possessing a conception of the transient and particular reality upon which it is necessary to act, and of the permanent and universal reality in which the former has its being and life. To know men it is necessary to understand man : and to know man it is necessary to know reality and its laws."**

True ! How true ! Yet this does not prove that the governing authorities actually possess the knowledge of particular and universal realities ; or, what is more important, that no one else possesses it, it may be even more soundly.

> **"There is no conception of the State which is not fundamentally a conception of life itself. Whether it is a philosophy or an intuition, a system of ideas which takes the shape of a logical construction, or is manifested in a vision or in faith, it is always, at least virtually, an organic conception of the world."**

This is a very important truth, that at the basis of our politics there lies a conception of life, the whole of life. I do not think the Fascists have drawn all the conclusions from it that can legitimately be drawn. To them it has meant that the whole of life is properly subject to the domination of the State. That is what they mean by the Totalitarian State, sometimes called the Ethical State ; "All in the State, nothing outside the State, nothing against the State." But it has other implications which reach further, and not inevitably to conclusions congenial to the Fascist mind.

First, for the statesman or the citizen there can be no more than a technical separation of the field of economics from that of politics. Every aspect of life merges into and is conditioned by the rest. So also with the relation between politics, economics and religion. The peculiar manifestation of, or the value placed upon, each incident or aspect of these, is not something separable from the rest, but is the result of either a philosophy or an intuition of the supreme good, the surmise of what it is best to ask from life as its supreme and ultimate happiness. When the surface of life alone seems to be touched, by a Government department or a town council, or when, let us say, work and wages are affected, or charities are regulated, then the action is not undertaken on its own isolated account, but finally as some sort of answer offered to the final questions of life. "Whence ? Whither ? For what rewards ? " The scheme of our economic

wants, the scale of our political preferences and aversions, and the pattern of our religious faith and disbeliefs, are all derivations of the personality *en bloc*, and true to its character.

It is precisely when the Fascist apologist realises this (if he does, indeed, in his marrow, realise it), that one is most aghast at the intentions of dictatorships. The democrat would say: "How can any one man, or any little group of men, presume to give so certain an answer to such ultimate questions that they feel justified in taking the fate and salvation of millions into their own hands? How can they feel so certain about the ultimate Good that they can take away from the mass of ordinary men and women the right to choose for themselves?" In the last resort there is no automatic objective test of the rightness or wrongness of any one man's answer to these literally world-moving anxieties. Milton said, "Twenty capacities, how good soever are insufficient to contain all the invention, the art, the wit, the grave and solid judgment of England . . . Neither is God appointed and confined, where and out of what place these his chosen shall be first heard to speak."

Indeed it is not improper in this context to have insinuated the word *God*, for this is the most common phrase for the ultimate good, and we shall in a moment see that the Fascists only avoid the word God (when they do) by the use of some alternative like the "Objective Will" as the means of overpowering the individual beliefs of other people. The Fascist case is seriously weakened by their claim (when it suits them) that intuitions are just as valid as rational philosophical systems as the foundations of political arrangements. I agree with this view; but then the consequence would seem to follow that the meanest man or woman has the right to express and seek the kind of government his or her intuitions demand. For if we limit ourselves to the field of intuitions, of what greater validity are Mussolini's, or those of the head of his Institutes of Fascist Culture, or his Minister of Corporations, or his Minister of Justice, and the whole bevy of professors and journalists, than that of Communists or anarchists or liberals, or the millions of almost inarticulate peasants?

The doctrine that there is no conception of the State which is not basically a conception of life certainly involves the

Government in the need to supervise and harmonise all the conflicts and diverse views of life, at least as far as considerations of effectiveness permit. Quite as inevitably it involves the recognition that the hearing of all the representative strains which spring from nature itself (intuition) is essential to the fullest development of *all* individuals. Each human being has, at the margin, a unique contribution to make to society; each has a validity, even, beyond that contribution. That is the implication of Mussolini's idea, *and it leads not towards his régime but directly away from it.* We shall see later how he glosses over this unpleasant implication.

> **"Thus Fascism cannot be understood in many of its practical manifestations, as a party organisation, as a system of education, as a discipline, unless it is looked at in the light of its general view of life: a spiritualised view."**

The Fascists also use the term "the Ethical State" to convey this view. It is the starting point for their claim to control all life within the State.

> **"To Fascism the world is not this material world which appears on the surface, in which man is an individual separated from all the others, standing by and for himself and governed by a natural law which instinctively impels him to live a life of egoistic and momentary pleasure."**

This reverts to the "idealism" of which Gentile was, in some respects, the leading advocate in pre-war Italy. It was a reaction against materialism and positivism. The ancestry of the ideas, and the influence of Nietzsche and Sorel on Mussolini's own scheme of values in particular, have been sufficiently discussed already. This reaction is world-wide, but not total. However idealism, as implying the sacrifice of the individual, or at least the more immediate pleasures to the more social and remote, does not mean that idealists are compelled to be loyal exclusively to the purposes proposed by Mussolini for Italy. For instance, the men from whom Italian idealism is derived, according to Gentile himself, were Mazzini and Garibaldi. They were both life-long warriors in the cause of national independence, the former for political liberty and a Republic, while Garibaldi aided the nascent Socialist movement. Both would have held a dictatorship, even a native one, in abhorrence; but both,

according to the most considerable Fascist theorist, and also to Mussolini, fell within the paragraph we discuss. Was not Mazzini, indeed, an idealist of a virtue far above the Fascist even ? And who dares to say that he would have been a Fascist ? No. He would again have been an exile.

> **" The Fascist man is an individual who is at once Nation and Country, the moral law which binds together individuals and generations in a tradition and a mission which suppresses the instinct of a life closed inside the brief cycle of pleasure, and establishes in duty a life superior to and free of the limits of time and space : a life in which the individual by means of the abnegation of himself, the sacrifice of his particular interests, even by his death, realises that entirely spiritual existence in which resides his value as a man."**

Fascism cannot lay claims to being alone in the intention to bind together individual and nation in a common fate and mission. Every political system in the world has done this and is doing it to-day. Even liberal systems of government, the object of Fascist fulminations, did and continue to do this. The great difference is that other régimes are less sanguine or wilful in crushing the individual in the name of such a purpose. The passage goes on to talk of the *self-abnegation* of the individual and the *sacrifice* of his particular interests. But is this, indeed, what Fascism seeks ? If we regard its action as its thought in its sincerest form, which is what the Fascist apologists demand (sometimes when it suits their case), then Fascism overthrew a system of government in which abnegation and sacrifice were *voluntary* things, and established a system of sacrifices which quite brutally denies the right of the people to judge of their rightness and necessity. The actual character of the nation and the mission, and the fate of succeeding generations, are not commended to their reason at all. They are not asked to make a reasonable choice and spiritualise themselves by the indwelling into the idea or the spirit of the choice. They are simply forced to accept the dictates, *forced* I say, of a government which is, in fact, alien to them.

Where is the spiritual value, the " spiritualised conception " in this ? Is it not a singular doctrine which sets out to establish the spiritualised life and ends by denying the spontaneous response of the mind ? that is afraid of the contact of any competing version of the truth ? The question also arises out of

Fascist experience whether the forceful imposition of *national* views does in fact produce a sense of national solidarity as effectively as the freedom of the whole nation to become one great debating assembly in which the acceptability of all the various outlooks is subjected to thorough examination, and the outlooks themselves brought into a free harmony, at the cost, and because at the cost, of spiritual and material travail. Surely the value of the idealism which Mussolini and Gentile applaud, came precisely from the fact that it was a free-born revolt against the materialism of the nineteenth century, and growing vigorously because it was not suffocated by Governments who did not like it. Surely the freedom of expression and dissemination of idealism was tenderly protected by the ethics of a State which so sincerely held its own ideals that it permitted the rise and organisation of a doctrine which finally took the State's life. Who showed a nobler self-abnegation and sacrifice than those Italians who wished to pass on the guarantees of a free political life to coming generations, and preserve for them the possibility of creating and hearing ever new versions of the mission of the State and civilisation ?

It should be observed how at the end of the passage, the Fascist apologist provides himself with the reason for extinguishing not merely the ideas, but even the life, of those who do not agree with him. Life has no sacredness in itself, is the Fascist doctrine, as it was that of the predecessors, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Sorel ; and to a closer discussion of this we return later.

> **" Thus it is a spiritualised conception, issued from the general reaction of the century against the flaccid and materialistic positivism of the eighteenth century. Anti-positivist, but positive ; not sceptical, nor agnostic nor pessimistic, nor passively optimistic, as are in general the doctrines (all negative) which places the centre of life outside man, who, with his free will can and ought to create the world for himself."**

Here, then, is a doctrine which more than other doctrines of the State purports to give a fuller value to the free will of man. It is a protest against the kind of fatalism which is found in Karl Marx, where man is the sport of methods of economic production. It is a protest against the excuses for the want of

energy in social improvements, excuses like those which said that Italy must remain a poor land, without international significance, because the poverty of its soil and mineral resources, configuration and climate, fatally determined its position.

As to " the materialism of the eighteenth century," we have more to say presently. Here we can say this, that one of its implications was that every man had the right to express himself, that is, to make manifest *his own will*, and so, emphatically, it placed the focus of life within each man. It denied that the centre of life justly resided, as it then actually resided, in the will of arbitrary governments. This passage has no serious value as evidence in favour of the superiority of dictatorial to democratic government. It is not more than an expression of will and energy native to Mussolini himself, repeatedly expressed, in action as well as words. If this doctrine of " free will " has validity for him, it certainly has validity for everybody. If willing is to be regarded as valid for Mussolini only, the nation may, as he wants it to, become great, but only in the sense that it extends its territories, causes other nations to listen to what it says, drains marshes, increases agricultural produce, undertakes social services, and so forth. But it must necessarily make the individuals small.

> **" Fascism desires man to be active and engaged in action with all his energies : it wants him to be virilely conscious of existing difficulties and ready to meet them. It considers life as a struggle, thinking that it is man's task to conquer for himself that which is really worthy of him, creating in himself first of all the instrument (physical, moral, intellectual) to establish it. So for the single individual ; so for the nation ; so for humanity. Therefore the high value of culture in all its forms (art, religion, science) and the supreme importance of education. Hence also the essential value of labour by which man conquers nature and creates the human world (economic, political, moral, intellectual ").**

Of what use, and how sincere, is it to declare that Fascism wants active, energetic men? How long indeed, would such men survive in the Fascist State to-day if they dared to think and act in a fashion disagreeable to the reigning oligarchy? Can any system of government which proceeds, as this does, from the complete supremacy of the Nation and the Race over the individual, and which is organised to dictate the realisation

of this supremacy, quicken the energies of men, and foster the manly consciousness of facing and understanding difficulties? The citizen in the Italian Fascist State to-day can well understand the difficulties of thinking for himself, but he certainly cannot *face* them. It is decidedly more certain that he can see difficulties under a free government; for under a free government he is allowed to examine public affairs in the light of day. Measurement and publicity of governmental policy, achievements and failures, are the foundations of democratic government, as is the unfettered proposal of remedies.

No type of government ever known is better adapted to teaching citizens "to face difficulties" than the democratic, which has always been advocated, and defended indeed, precisely because it made possible the political equivalent of "the struggle for life" and "survival of the fittest" in our life in the State.

Nor can it be denied that the Fascist movement was built not upon an acceptance of the tenets it now parades, but precisely upon the denial of their value for Italy, and even for the whole world! In the highest issues the Fascist State permits no struggle, because it permits no clash of views to come to public light. No man, in fact, except the Duce himself, is allowed to try to conquer for himself "that which is really worthy of him." Or is "*really* worthy," with the emphasis on *really*, to be interpreted in the sense that there is no real worth unless it be that which the State prescribes for us because it occupies a position knowing and reflecting all facts, and all humanity past, present, and to come? Indeed, in conformity with the rest of the Fascist doctrine, and with Fascist practice, it can as we shall soon see, only mean the latter.

The Fascist argument proceeds further and the struggle between men is set in the international field. This brings us to Mussolini's doctrine of War. In his Essay, Part II, he says:

"And above all, Fascism, the more it considers and observes the future and the development of humanity quite apart from political considerations of the moment, believes neither in the possibility nor the utility of perpetual peace. It thus repudiates the doctrine of Pacifism—born of a renunciation of the struggle and an act of cowardice in the face of sacrifice. War alone brings up to its highest

tension all human energy and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put men into the position where they have to make the great decision—the alternative of life and death."

This is good Nietzschean and Sorelian doctrine : it has recently been repeated by Mussolini in even more sensational figures of speech. On May 26th, 1934, he told the Chamber of Deputies, " Meanwhile history tells us that war is the phenomenon which accompanies the development of humanity. Perhaps it is the tragic destiny which weighs on man. War is to man as maternity is to woman . . . I do not believe in perpetual peace ; not only that, I consider it depresses and negatives the fundamental virtues of man which only in bloody effort reveal themselves in the full light of the sun." After the army manœuvres of August, 1934, he declared, " We must not therefore (war is possible and may break out unexpectedly, from one moment to the other) be prepared for war to-morrow, but for to-day. We are becoming and we shall always approach nearer to being a military nation. Since we are not afraid of words let us add : militarist. To complete the matter : war-like, that is endowed more and more with the virtues of obedience, sacrifice, and devotion to the Fatherland."[1]

Is he really serious about this ? Or is he merely unfurling a myth, in the true Sorelian-Pareto manner, as the exciter of national emotions ? or playing the part of hero-prophet ? All, it seems. Even before the war he cherished neither native nor doctrinal prejudices in favour of peace or the preservation of human life. . . . And the appeal is one which can keep the rising generation in a state of excitement about the safety and glory of their own country and therefore loyal to their leader.

How sound are the views expressed here ? First, is war inevitable ? Only in certain circumstances. It is inevitable if some nations or parts of nations regard their own culture or race as so superior that they are prepared to subjugate or extirpate other peoples. This becomes inevitable in proportion as peoples, and especially their rulers, create such types of government that the people must be kept wildly hysterical about something

[1] August 28th, 1934.

called The Nation or The Race. But this is not really fatal. Even as the Wars of Religion of centuries ago died out, so would national wars if the humiliations of subject peoples were dispelled, and an international rationalism were allowed to develop unhindered by royalists and dictators who must buttress their own power by its denial. Mussolini once belonged to a Party which he afterwards martyred for its loyalty to such rationalism. The working-class movement was, in fact, the hope of the world in this respect ; and by helping to smash it in his own country, and disintegrate its international connections, Mussolini the more helped to make his own doctrine true.

In February 1935, indeed, Fascist newspapers are telling their own people and the world, that Italy must make war on Abyssinia for "the cause of Italy is that of civilisation." (*Corriere della Sera*, February 13th, 1935.)

Let us turn to the other great cause of wars—the economic. Is this, too, inevitable ? At first sight it seems so.

Our own century has made the Standard of Living its God. The material means to self-preservation and self-development are certainly our indispensable instruments to resisting the inexorable pressure of matter on the human will. But the too zealous, though legitimate, pursuit of material welfare may end in war, civil or international. It is sad, but nevertheless true, that almost all our virtuous acts, acts for which the present standards of civilisation would return nothing but praise, force us to be acquisitive. It must be admitted that the special shaping of nineteenth-century civilisation raised such acquisitive life to the zenith of virtue. Thus care for the individual himself, care for his family, care for his class, care for his nation, all took a predominantly economic form. The distant implications of this, however, could not easily be seen by the separate individuals or families or classes. Population increased at a rate determined freely by individuals, the standard of living required for the new population also rose, but few people were conscious of the relatively limited nature of the earth and the earth's resources.

The quickly expanding nature of human demands on life, and the rapid increase in population, were bound to make the political struggle at home and abroad severe. Hence a haste to

secure colonies and " spheres of legitimate expansion." Hence a jealous mutual watchfulness on the part of the Powers. Hence immigration and emigration. Hence also wars, some directly and clearly economic, some as the result of racial expansionism mingled with the economic motive ; for racial expansion, like individual expansion, needs material foundations. This motive, as we have noticed, even brought some Italian Socialists to the point of believing that the Italian proletariat needed a foreign policy, and to the theory of just wars between proletarian nations and rich nations. For Italy this is especially a problem, since it is a land with a large and very fecund population and with a small and extremely poor territory. And Mussolini has declared that " poor countries cannot afford liberty," as the excuse for destroying liberty at home. Italy is especially a country which in the hands of statesmen who keenly appreciate the splendid qualities of their people (and they *are* splendid in many ways), and conscious of the contribution which Rome and the centres of art and politics, commerce, exploration and science, have made to the world's civilisation, must feel that they are hampered and confined. They are bound to feel angry when they find that other nations have been before them, and now pursue exclusive policies, or treat Italian immigrants badly, or do not cultivate their colonies intensively, pursuing a dog-in-the-manger policy. (As Italy embarked on the Abyssinian adventure, *Libro e Moschetto*, the University newspaper, carried on its columns these mottoes : " Italy : a population without land. Africa : a land without population." February 16th, 1935.) They are less inclined to be pacifist than those countries which, well-supplied with colonies, dominions, protectorates, and enjoying world prestige, always enjoy an outlet for their population *at good wages and salaries*. Looking at them, and at the methods employed over the centuries in the development of such possessions, it is not unnatural that modern Italian statesmen are cynical about peace and war.

Yet it does not follow that we are entitled to teach that war is inevitable. Only if men were faced with the direct and inescapable choice between death by starvation in their own country, or by slavery in another, or by fighting for room to move and live, would war be inevitable. The choice, however, is affected

by several factors. The productivity of a country may be improved ; there are still possibilities of emigration. If the statesman exploits these variable factors *and if he does not pursue a policy of encouraging the birth-rate by every conceivable means*,[1] but, instead, holds a more temperate view of the claims of his race (even yet unborn) upon the earth's resources, and the good temper of other peoples, then war is not inevitable. Moreover, it is Mussolini's more general doctrine that nothing is inevitable, that everything is possible. He expresses himself thus in order to keep himself and his collaborators, from Minister to office-boy, willing, confident and active. Why, in this gravest of all matters, does the vindicator of the Will become fatalist ? He has the responsibility, as, of course, all statesmen have, to be realistic in situations which are admittedly potent causes of international strife. But it depends on the statesmen whether the threats shall materialise. If they teach their peoples the dangers of too intense a chase after a high standard of living or of unrestricted breeding, and if they provide or encourage the provision of interesting and even exciting ways of using the wealth which is already quite abundant, they need not fear or preach the inevitability of war from economic causes.

We turn to the doctrine that war is desirable because it is the eventuality in which the nobility or cowardice, the idealism or baseness, of man is finally weighed and decided. " War alone brings up to its highest tension all human energy, and puts the stamp of nobility upon the peoples who have the courage to meet it. All other trials are substitutes, which never really put men into the position where they have to make the great decision ; the alternative of life and death." I find it difficult to believe that Mussolini means this. Not that I wish to imply that he is insincere. He is often sound, genuine and sincere : sometimes more so, indeed, than certain democratic leaders. But at this turn in his doctrine he seems to me to have allowed his reading of philosophers like Nietzsche to overcome his own good sense, which I trust much more than his philosophising. Who has ever, in fact, been in the position to make this desirable and noble choice ? How many men, in fact, have been in the position to say Yes or No to a war ? If they have been excited

[1] This is what the Fascist Government does. Cf. Chapter XVI. below.

by the arguments of others to the point of willing a war when the war itself was not strictly necessary, as Italy's entrance in 1915, how many of them have known the issues, even the broad spiritual issues, sufficiently intimately to support Mussolini's thesis ? Very, very few ! How many Fascists understand Mussolini's Essay sufficiently well to make a real choice in deciding whether to fight for or against its doctrine ?

There is a more serious flaw in the argument. To go to war under orders, or to decide to go to war as a volunteer, by no means implies a recognition of the possibility of danger and death. Mussolini surely has enough psychological penetration to know how few even of the decorated heroes have clearly faced *death*. Who knows the death of *oneself*; who can imagine it ? Is it not truer to say that only the blind seek death, but the seeing fly from it ? It was said by Rochefoucauld that there are two things which men cannot gaze on fixedly : they are the sun and death. It is difficult to understand how this can form a serious part of a serious attempt to found the Fascist State upon a doctrine. Mussolini himself was in the trenches and took special pains to observe his colleagues, with this result :

" A company at war has about 250 men. From the point of view of morale they can be divided in groups in the following manner. There are 25 soldiers—artisans, professional men and volunteers—who feel the reasons of our war and fight with enthusiasm. Another 25 comprise those who returned voluntarily from the countries of Europe or beyond the ocean. They are people who have lived, people who have acquired a certain social experience. They are excellent soldiers in every respect. There are about 50—young men—who are in the war as volunteers. The largest part of the company, about 100, is represented by those who are between the resigned and willing : they accept the accomplished fact without discussing it. They would have remained quite willingly at home, but now that the war is on they know how to do their duty. There are in every company about 40 individuals who are uncertain, who can be brave or cowardly according to the circumstances. The remainder consists of refractory people, unconscientious, trash, which has not always the courage to reveal itself for fear of the military code. These figures may vary, but the proportion stands good. Finally, the morale of the soldiers depends on that of the officers who command them " (April 7th, 1916).

It seems, then, that a very small proportion, if any at all, fit Mussolini's argument. There is something more to be said. If the choice of life or death is to have the ennobling effect alleged in the argument, it must surely be a free choice? But the rest of Mussolini's system is directed to proving that there ought to be no free choice, even in this supreme interest. For if domestic policy is shielded from the free play of competing theories of life, the issues of foreign policy are lifted altogether beyond the ken of the ordinary man. It is true that the Press informs him about international affairs; but only the version provided by the Government is made public, and he does not choose the Government. The State is Totalitarian, that is, it knows all, does all, says all, forbids all, permits all; but the State in Italy is the *de facto* Government or, in other words, Mussolini and a few friends. He makes the choice of peace and war. The régime in which the truth in Mussolini's theory is best realised is not the Fascist régime, but the democratic régime, the only one in which freedom of choice means anything at all.

Are we then to reject Mussolini's doctrines on war entirely? From our analysis it will be gathered that we think the first part contains enough truth to offer us a warning: that there must be deliberately organised teaching against the vices of economic self-indulgence, against racial and national pride, against the encouragement of belligerence, and the provision of opportunities of the "moral equivalents for war," a mission of creativeness. Not that Mussolini draws these conclusions. His doctrines make a virtue not of economic and spiritual *laissez faire*, but of a war upon the fatalism of the factors leading to war. Yet if I deny the inevitability and desirability of war, I do not deny the inevitability of self-defence or the desirability of idealistic endeavour with all one's energies engaged to secure success.

Mussolini's notions of war and imperialism are closely connected, and we may explain his views on imperialism before we pass on to the next stage in his Essay. Accused of imperialism soon after the end of the War, Mussolini answered:

"Imperialism is the eternal and immutable law of life. It is, at bottom, nothing other than the need, the desire and the will to expansion which every individual, and every live and vital people,

possess. The means by which imperialism is exercised is that which distinguishes one imperialism from the other, whether in individuals or in peoples. Imperialism is not as is usually thought necessarily aristocratic and military. It may be democratic, pacific, economic, spiritual " (1919).

This is as sound a definition of imperialism as any. It is good that the distinction is made between expansion by persuasion and expansion by force. For those who are anxious to learn, it reveals that imperialism is expressed as much by everyday encroachments as by conspicuous foreign expeditions. It draws attention also to the imperialism of countries which, sated with vast territories and rich in agricultural and mineral resources, complacently preserve and digest their gains, denying the right of entry and common enjoyment to poorer peoples. It has, I must confess, always been a moral question with me whether the United States of America or certain of the British Dominions have the right to limit immigration. They do so, of course, on the ground that their own is a superior civilisation. This is sheer, if defensive, imperialism. And this policy, when it has not been the invention of Socialist leaders, has been stoutly defended by them. They deny the rights of property to the bourgeoisie, but in relation to their fellows across the sea they assert a property in the whole country. Without denying their rights to exclude immigrants, we can at least ask them not to be humbugs about the policies of expansion pursued by the capitalists and vilified as imperialism.

Here Mussolini's sincerity is all to the good.

> **" This positive conception of life is clearly an ethical conception. And it includes all reality, not merely human activity which governs it. No action is beyond the moral judgement; there is nothing in the world which can be divested of the value belonging to all things in virtue of their moral aims. Life, therefore, as conceived by the Fascist, is serious, austere, religious : All poised in a world sustained by the moral and responsible forces of the spirit. Fascism disdains the ' comfortable ' life."**

From his earliest political moments, Mussolini has been untiring in his denunciation of Socialism directed towards petty material gains. Not that he was not vitally interested in the

improvement of the material conditions of the working classes. Who that was born in such a house as his, and saw around him the misery of the everyday life of the working classes, could steel his heart against an improvement of their lot? His father fought for this; and so did he. But he was unwilling to fight for this alone; and especially unwilling that the workers should be taught to imagine that material improvement was all that Socialism represented. The idealism of the first fifteen years of the new century, risen in him to the temperature of Nietzschean ardour, abominated the view that the worthy object of the life and sacrifice of man is only a higher standard of living. What, then, was to distinguish the moral worthiness of the worker from the middle classes? He teaches not the doctrine "Live comfortably!" but "Live dangerously!" When he was asking Italy to enter the War, it was not for gains, or even that there was unredeemed territory: it was for an ideal reason, the preference of French civilisation to German:

"Therefore, it is necessary to come to a decision; either war or else let us finish with the comedy of being a great Power. Let us make gambling houses, hotels, brothels, and let us grow fat. A people may even have this ideal. To grow fat is the ideal of the lower species of animals" (January 25th, 1915).

We have already cited his hymn to struggle and sacrifice that marked the end of the not very happy year 1920. And in his polemics with the Socialist Party the motive rings clear again:

"The tragedy is that Socialism cannot print any other mark of manufacture upon its principles. It must continue to be a specific for the happiness of the proletariat and of all men. It must continue to make believe that only in Socialism will all men be free, rich, intelligent, and happy. Socialism guarantees a minimum of felicity to men: wine, chicken, cinemas, and women. But in real life happiness does not exist" (December 23rd, 1921).

In the Roosevelt-Hoover Election Campaign of 1932, the apostle of "rugged individualism" also offered these things: a chicken in every pot, and *two* cars in every garage.

Mussolini's call to a stoical, austere and energetic life is not an excuse for not developing the social services. On the contrary, the great works of the Fascist régime have been precisely those which English Socialists and Tory democrats would applaud. Mussolini's attitude here is almost exactly Bernard Shaw's attitude ; a sovereign contempt for a civilisation whose supreme achievement is the production of chocolate creams !

Now the consistent preaching of such a doctrine has an immense value to the statesman who preaches it in purity. It is a very powerful force enabling him to impose sacrifices upon the nation, or any part of it, when the necessity arises. When cuts are to be made in official salaries or rents or the rate of interest on Government securities to balance the Budget, or provide the funds for national armaments, when reductions of wages become necessary because productivity has declined, he may appeal to an idealism which transcends the Standard of Living. And when there are great business slumps some calming of the spirit of acquisitiveness and of beggar-my-neighbour can be produced by frank argument of this sort : " Perhaps we are moving towards a period of mankind levelled on a lower plane. We need not get alarmed about this. It may be a very strong humanity, capable of asceticism and heroism the like of which we cannot at present imagine." How many democratic statesmen have spoken as frankly in regard to the Depression ? Of course they would not dare to do so, on pain of unpopularity. But who even had it in his heart to speak in this wise ? Very, very few. To rebuke greed, whether it is working-class or middle-class humanity that is guilty of it, has been the merit only of the noblest. When he does this, Mussolini can refuse to give what too many democratic politicians are so fond of giving, a bill of exchange on a hypothetical future.

Now the whole of this Essay might have been entitled the Duties of Man ; for its spirit, and more often than not its very phrases, emphasise the obligations of the individual. But there is nothing in it so direct as Mussolini's dicta :

" The great word given by Fascism to the Italians is this : there are no rights without a duty having been first fulfilled " (October 30th, 1926), and, " we say, first duties and then rights " (October 23rd, 1925).

This is in the true Mazzinian tradition, although an imperfect interpretation of Mazzini, who expected the duties of man to be fully assumed by free men.

The Fascist refurbishing of the tradition has, however, considerable worth at the present juncture of civilisation. Since Rousseau the political emphasis has been on Rights, although Rousseau himself balanced these by duties, and severe ones at that. The democratic system is one in which the competition among politicians for the opinions of the masses turns on promises of the excess of pleasures which Government will give over the taxes and obligations it will exact. It is not surprising that the masses come to regard Government as the inexhaustible reservoir of wealth. They are therefore encouraged to demand more and more from it, regardless of the consequent exasperation of other classes and groups, and regardless of the real source and limitations of the wealth which the Government dispenses, namely, their own industry, intelligence, and reasonableness.

Hence it is necessary to bring back the sense of proportion, and again to teach that there are no Rights without Duties; that those who enjoy place a burden on someone else; and that a counter-pressure upon them is therefore evoked. All this is sound sociology. But it is in no way a justification for dictatorship. That could only be justified if it could be proved beyond a peradventure that the masses subjected to it were incapable of learning the correlativity of Rights and Duties by the process of free government. It is, of course, the extravagance of some who make their career by the thoughtless offer of Rights, that has caused the equally extravagant reaction of dictatorships which impose Duties without needing to justify them by their utility to the individuals.

The emphasis on Discipline is therefore very strong in the Fascist creed.

"Discipline is the keystone of the power of nations.

"Discipline is the privilege, the force, and the glory of every army.

"The true, the wise, the holy discipline consists in obedience even when to obey displeases and especially when it represents a sacrifice.

"It is necessary that each of you should immerse himself in the discipline of everyday life. The great hours do not always sound nor on all the clocks. The wheel of destiny passes only once.

" The past century was the century of our independence, the present century must be the century of our power. But what is the magic key which opens the door to power ? The disciplined will. Therefore every one of you must consider himself a soldier, a soldier even when he is not wearing the green-grey uniform, a soldier also when he is at work in the office, the workshop, or the fields : a soldier bound to all the rest of the army, a molecule who feels and pulsates with the entire organism."[1]

> **" Fascism is a religious conception, in which man is regarded in his immanent relation with a superior law, with an objective Will which transcends the particular individual and raises him to be a member conscious of a spiritual society. Whoever sees only considerations of mere expediency in the religious policy of the Fascist régime has not understood that Fascism beyond being a system of government is also and above all a system of thought."**

That Fascism is a religious conception is consistent with the rest of the doctrine, and especially with that part of it which insists that politics are at base religious or ethical systems. It also supports the asceticism implied in the previous paragraph.

Mussolini insinuates that the settlement with the Roman Catholic Church of 1929, involving the acceptance of religious education in the schools (a strange undertaking for a former anti-clerical and a painful one to many Fascists) was not merely opportunistic. As a matter of fact, as we show later, nothing could have been better calculated to reduce the number of Mussolini's enemies. There was abundant political profit in the Conciliation, as the speeches of Mussolini prove.

Nevertheless, this does not confute the declaration that Fascism is a religious conception, or that the Duce is tolerant of the gods of other people. He says in the Second Part of the Essay :

" The Fascist State is not indifferent to the fact of religion in general or to that particular and positive faith which is Italian Catholicism. The State professes no theology, but a morality, and in the Fascist State religion is considered as one of the deepest manifestations of men, thus it is not only respected but defended and protected. The Fascist State has never tried to create its own God, as at one moment Robespierre and the wildest extremists of the Convention tried to do ; nor does it vainly seek to obliterate religion

[1] From *Il Capo Centuria*, pp. 11–12 ; published by the Opera Balilla—the Manual of the group leaders of the Balilla.

from the hearts of men as does Bolshevism. Fascism respects the God of the ascetics, the saints and heroes, and equally, God as He is perceived and worshipped by simple people."

This is a particularly interesting passage, as it reveals the characteristic opaqueness of the Fascist mind. Is it not obvious that every politician is necessarily engaged in persuading people to worship a god? There is no exit from this truth by using the word "morality," as Mussolini does, instead of the word "theology." This is merely a quibble. All systems of politics imply a morality. Indeed they are a morality, for all systems of morality are merely the application to everyday affairs of either an instinctive or a logical notion of God, that is, of the ultimate good with either its summit or its point of departure in an intuition of a ruling force or forces. Maritain's saying: "Every pedagogue worships a God," is with evident enthusiasm, and quite properly, made the starting point of a treatise on Fascist education by one of Mussolini's most trusted educationists.[1] As soon as the total worth of life is involved, and it is always involved, in political persuasion or activity, God, who was supposed to have been pitchforked out of Parliament by science and evolution has to be introduced into the House again —or, better still, having taken the oath He had never left His seat. When the politician finds an answer to the riddle of existence he may move mankind. And Mussolini understands this well enough. Long before he arrived he used to meditate on the spiritual lever with which he should be able to move mankind. Thus,

> "The saying 'give me a point of support and I will raise the world' is true also and above all perhaps in the world of the mind. Our problem is to find a point of support. Those whom Schüre has called 'the great initiates' have found this point of support: Buddha, Christ and Mahomet have found a point of support and raised three worlds" (June 13th, 1918).

The point of support is none other than a god. It need not be the classic gods, or the accepted gods of the existing Churches, but it is a god. All statesmen, even the Bolsheviks, are obliged to

[1] Padellaro, *Scuola e Rivoluzione*, 1932, p. 9.

invent a god as soon as they have destroyed one, and they destroy the living one in preparation for the coming reign of the newly risen. Fascism has its gods whose countenances will become more familiar as the discussion develops ; and it has all the trappings of the Church, its appeals to Faith, its Leader, its Catechism, conventicles (Institutes of Fascist Culture and the Milan School of Fascist Mysticism), sacraria, hymns, missals, martyrology, hierarchies, and so forth. It even has the mystery of Transubstantiation. For members who have died in great exploits like the Air Flight of 1933, or in naval manœuvres, or in some act of civic bravery, Fascism claims to be their resurrection and their life. When the roll is called, and the unbreathing lips remain silent, his circle of Fascist comrades reply, " Present ! "

Either, then, a god is fully acknowledged (even though not accurately recognised), and the statesman proceeds with the passion and the will of Mussolini, or, as in the sceptical half-century, it is admitted that all should freely find their own gods, that, in other words, the spiritual value of tolerance shall be the god who rules our actions. But some people cannot comprehend the spiritual value of tolerance for others, though, like Mussolini in his powerless days, they recognise its value for themselves and their friends. There are men and women who though able intellectually to apprehend the value of tolerance, are too dogmatic by disposition to sanction tolerance if they have the power to deny it.

Let not the Fascists therefore believe that they are not like Robespierre in inventing a god or like Stalin in destroying a religion. The Pope (as we shall see) is not so assured that God is being left quite the same by the Fascists[1] ; and as to the denial that a god has been invented, what is the " objective Will " but the Fascist god ? In the official version of the Essay the author goes so far, indeed, as to show reverence to the Will by a capital W. I do not cavil ; every man has the right to his own god, as Mussolini's teacher, William James, pointed out. But certain blindnesses in the Fascist mind seem to me to merit remark.

Now the paragraph under discussion claims that every man's

[1] See Chapter XVI. below.

God, however elaborately institutionalised, or however simple, is respected and even preserved in the Fascist State. What has become of Mussolini's penetration? The days have surely vanished when religion was embodied only in Churches. Nobody has ever been intolerant about the notion of God in itself. The problem of tolerance and intolerance only arises when our conceptions of God are expressed in words and behaviour having social effects. That is not tolerance which allows a man to conceive God as he pleases, providing he does nothing to make the reign of that God affect the everyday life of himself and his neighbours. To think of tolerance only in terms of a toleration of the Churches, and of personal gods so long as they keep themselves strictly to themselves, is to be mentally enmeshed in the principles of the French Revolution which Mussolini affects to supersede. In the world of to-day the equivalent of tolerance in other ages is tolerance of unconventional *political* beliefs, which the Fascist apologist himself declares are "conceptions of the whole of life." It is a poor tolerance which only tolerates the Church, for men can worship in their hearts. Real tolerance in the twentieth century is tolerance of independent political parties, for these are Churches applying a view of the ultimate good, a view of God, to the life of the nation and the world. Lecky, the historian, once suggested that the age of the great heresiarchs is over, and he meant that there were no more hammers of the established Churches. He forgot that the great heresies of to-day are couched in political, economic, and social terms. The great heresiarchs of which the world is to-day extraordinarily full are no longer the Mahomets, the Wycliffes, the Luthers, and the Calvins, but the Karl Marxes, the Lenins, the Nietzsches, the Ibsens, the Shaws, the Wellses—and the Mussolinis! And these men are also the High Priests in the temples, seeking always, as Mussolini seeks, the secret of the Voice that speaks out of the Ark, and trying to visualise the brightly tinted contours of the Promised Land.

If the objective Will transcends the individual, who shall interpret its meaning? Free men or the State? May we suspect that the objective Will is only Mussolini in disguise in a luminous cloud? Is the objective Will to be discovered by the free expression and mingling of the intuitions of all men, or is the objective

Will to be simply the very subjective Will of the Leader? Of course, the Essay concludes, and other contributions of Mussolini confirm, the objective Will is the will of Mussolini; properly so, he claims, by reasoning we presently discuss only to reject. Mussolini, and a few men selected by him, utter the commandments of the objective Will. And so we reach the ineluctable conclusion. The Fascist Government *is* God. How pleased Hegel would have been with this piece of metaphysics which served the Prussian monarchy and aristocracy so well!

> **"Fascism is an historical conception in which man is not what he is excepting as a function of the spiritual process in which he participates, in his family and social group in the nation and history in which all the nations collaborated. Hence the great value of tradition in memories, in language, in rules of social life. Outside History man is nothing."**

The emphasis of Fascism is heavily upon tradition, and the Nationalist Party's fusion in Fascism accentuated it even more.[1] The Nation is a concept which above all refers to the past of a particular human aggregation. If its duration and future spring from present living minds, its character descends almost altogether from the past. Let us recall Renan's famous description: "A nation is a soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which are really one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the past, the other in the present. One is the possession in common of a rich inheritance of memories; the other is present consent, the desire to live together, the will to realise the unimpaired heritage."

Gentile points out that there are two possible ways of regarding the past. The Nationalist worships the past for its own sake, and to subject the present will of the people and their governors to a political mortmain of class, Crown, Church, and the rest of the monuments and values of the past. The soaring spirit of man must be chained down by the wisdom and the institutions of

[1] There is a good dose of Professor Rocco in this passage. Cf. *Political Doctrine of Fascism*: "For liberalism, society has no purposes other than those of the members living at a given moment. For Fascism, society has historical and immanent ends of preservation, expansion, improvement, quite distinct from those of the individuals which at any moment compose it; so distinct in fact that they may even be in opposition. Hence the necessity, for which the older doctrines make little allowance, of sacrifice, even up to total immolation of individuals, in behalf of society. . . ."

our fathers. This, according to the view of Gentile and Mussolini is *not* the Fascist outlook. They vindicate the right to choose whatever is useful for the tasks and hopes of to-day, and reject the rest. Thus Mussolini :

> " Tradition is certainly one of the greatest spiritual forces of peoples in so far as it is a successive and constant creation of their mind. But we cannot accept the absolute thesis that all that is tradition is sacred, immutable, and not to be interfered with. . . . Instead, history offers us a panorama of hierarchies, which live, which are transformed, which die " (*Gerarchia*, January 25th, 1922).

Thus the doctrine of historical determinism is expressed in a form much more extreme than Mussolini himself intends to observe. Logic is for lesser minds. His inward doctrine, and his inward compulsions, are all against historical determinism. He himself is to choose what parts of history shall be valid and what discarded as rules of future conduct. It is well for him that he treats his own doctrine of historical determinism as a hand-maid only. For history itself would not condone either his creed or his government. Is not the French Revolution of 1789 a part of Italian history ? Is not the Renaissance a part of Italian history, with its emphasis on the anti-religious, secular, and tolerant life of art and science ? As for the French Revolution, would it not be wrong to forget what the Risorgimento owed to its "immortal principles" and its warriors ? Can we possibly forget, can Mussolini forget, that he used the spectacle of France, the martyr for liberty in Europe for over a century, as a motive for going to war in 1915 ? The deposit of values of economic liberalism is also a component of the history of Italy. Yet sometimes it is accepted as a valid part of contemporary civilisation, and sometimes vilified as the very devil.

The Fascist Government, so far dressed up as God, now comes on the stage dressed up as History. And for youth, especially, an education in History is esteemed to be of fundamental worth, calling for special exertion. The teachings of Sorel and Pareto regarding social Myths have assumed two forms : the apotheosis of Rome, and the re-writing of the history of the Risorgimento. A word or two on each of these is revealing. Let us take a sample of the Rome-myth :

"Rome is our point of departure and of reference: it is our symbol, or if you like it is our Myth. We dream of a Roman Italy, that is to say wise and strong, disciplined and imperial. Much of that which was the immortal spirit of Rome resurges in Fascism; Roman are the Lictor's Rods, Rome our fighting organisation, Rome our pride and our courage: *Civis romanus sum.*[1] And now it is necessary that the history of to-morrow, that which we wish assiduously to create, shall not be the contrast to or the parody of yesterday. The Romans were not only warriors, but formidable constructors who could defy, as they have defied, time. Italy was Roman for the first time after fifteen centuries in the War and in victory: it must now be Roman in peace. And this Roman spirit, renewed and renewing itself, has these names: Discipline and Labour" (April 21st, 1922).

In the Mussolinian dream of Rome, then, the qualities of wisdom, strength, discipline, pride, courage, construction, warlike courage, industry, are prominent. One thing is characteristically absent from this list: the *freedom* of the Republic. For Mussolini has undoubtedly chosen dictatorial Rome as the Rome of the Fascist myth; and he has not emphasised the fact that the Lictor's Rods were as much the sign of the authority of the republican consuls as of the Kings and Emperors. However, if he wishes to choose them as the emblem of Fascism, we cannot quarrel with his choice; but let it not be pretended that history imposes the task upon him and gives authority to overthrow the liberties of the Italians of to-day. History is not used by Mussolini as a liberator of the human spirit, but as the key of its prison.

There is, of course, also a more immediate practical reason for the myth of Rome. The acquisition of Rome as a national capital was so recent that the other centres of civic life, such as Turin, Milan, Florence, Naples, Palermo, outplayed it as foci of political interest. The unifying power of a national capital like London, Paris, Vienna, or Berlin was still lacking. Partisan propaganda directed against the Parliament at Montecitorio, not the least venomous by the Fascists, helped to weaken an already weak integrating force. Mussolini found it a practical necessity to draw all hearts as well as all strings together in Rome. Hence the old overcoat was covered by a Black Shirt, and the Black Shirt by the toga of the Cæsars. He says:

[1] Author's comment: Observe the crescendo of rhetorical intoxication!

"But if Mazzini and Garibaldi tried three times to arrive at Rome, and if Garibaldi gave his red shirt to the tragic and inexorable alternative 'Rome or Death,' this means that, to the best men of the Risorgimento, Rome already had an essential function of the first importance to perform in the new history of the Italian nation. Let us then with minds pure and free from animosity lift up our thoughts to Rome, which is one of the few spiritual cities existent in the world.... And we want to make Rome the city of our ideals, a city cleaned and purified of all those elements which corrupt and defile her; we wish to make Rome the throbbing heart, the living spirit of the Italy of which we dream" (September 20th, 1922).

The Risorgimento has received as queer a treatment in the hands of the makers of history. They can now prove that the Risorgimento was an entirely Italian phenomenon commencing long before the French Revolution; that unfavourable circumstances enabled French and English ideas of individualism and liberty to penetrate Italy; that European countries took advantage, material and spiritual, of Italy's weakness; but that now Italy has recovered her independence. "With the Fascist Revolution, Italy has liberated herself from foreign influences... and has set herself to work, under the untiring guidance of the Duce, at a great reconstructive enterprise, which alone can save modern civilisation."[1] Yet another historian sets out to prove that Fascism is the completion of the Risorgimento, which was botched until the Fascists brought the *masses* into national life.[2]

"Therefore Fascism is against all individualistic abstractions founded on a materialistic basis of the type of the eighteenth century and is opposed to all the Utopias and Jacobin innovations. It does not believe in the possibility of 'Happiness' on earth as expressed in the Economic literature of the seventeenth century and therefore rejects all the teleological conceptions according to which at a certain period of history there will be a final reconciliation of mankind. This would imply placing oneself outside history and life which is a continuous flowing and becoming."

[1] Cf. Solmi, *La Genesi del Fascismo*, 1933.

[2] Cf. Curcio, *L'Eredità del Risorgimento*, 1930. Cf. Avenati, *La Rivoluzione Italiana dà Alfieri a Mussolini*, 1934. This won the prize in the competition of the Società Storica Subalpina for a dissertation on the theme of the relationship between Fascism and Risorgimento "making the latter, by the action of the Duce, the creator of perfect national unity."

This announcement takes us to the heart of many Fascist errors. What was the materialist basis of the eighteenth-century type ? Briefly, certain French thinkers of the eighteenth century carried to a more logical extreme the English doctrines of the supreme importance of sense-experience as the foundation of knowledge and ethics. They did this because they were impressed by the extraordinary findings of physics ; and partly as a weapon against the monarchy and Church of their time. Holbach and Helvétius made the whole of ethics and politics rest upon the unique reality of the evidence of our senses. The soul itself was only the combination of all the senses. Nothing else in the world could teach us values of any kind but our senses. Since the senses are the final and only trustworthy evidence, and since they differ even if only a little from person to person, it follows that we must leave moral principle and judgement to each individual. If there were a number of similar but not identical machines, we would expect different products from them. But human beings are machines ! So said La Mettrie's treatise, *L'Homme Machine*.

Each then must be the ultimate judge of what constituted happiness for him, the harmony and suitability of the environment for him. And also, since the fate of men was dependent on the satisfaction of their senses, it was clear that a change of the environment would, if properly contrived, prove for them an increase in felicity. The more perfect the environment the more perfect the human beings ; the worse the environment, the more unhappy, and therefore, the more reason for a revolution to transform it. This led to three conclusions : political individualism as elaborated by Rousseau and the French Revolutionists, an individualism only mitigated by the free contract of all with all ; a distrust of doctrines of government which reposed on authority, divine or dynastic or historical, which looked for justification outside the individuals subject to it ; " the greatest happiness of the greatest number " as the supreme law of human government, a law as binding on the behaviour of each individual as upon the governments which properly were nothing but the agents of all.

These principles gave rise, among other things, to English Utilitarianism, founded by Jeremy Bentham, the school that

claimed that each act of legislation should follow only after a sum in "moral arithmetic," an exercise in the "felicific calculus," a balance sheet of pleasures and pains; that all circumstances, feelings, interests, indirect as well as direct, should be weighed and calculated before the freedom of individuals was fettered by the force of government. This standard of political behaviour has been of incalculable worth to English social development and to the English character. In its essence the Benthamite creed requires that the feelings and interests of the least among mankind shall not be disregarded, that every step shall be pondered and weighed and justified; and that, *for fear that our blindness to the intensity and character of the interests of others may cause us to ignore or measure them wrongly, they themselves shall have the right not only to represent their own feelings to us, but even to hold up the government to compel it to listen.*

This is the idea against which the Fascists, and their friends the Nazis, wildly fulminate. What do they put in the place of utility? They have the Objective Will, History, a Mission, the Ethical State, and the Spirit. Now one of these same materialists, Holbach, in his *System of Nature*, shrewdly remarked that the separation of the spiritual from the material had given the priests all their opportunities of dominating mankind! Of course this is true. As soon as we deviate from calculable and provable utilities, to such unquantitative, imponderable elements like the Soul, any charlatan, any sophistical twister, can shake the plain man's rational resistance to his arguments and purposes. Does not Mussolini recognise this? Such mysteries as these have always been the means used by the great quacks in the history of mankind to lead mankind astray. Is Mussolini not afraid that by assimilating a doctrine of this kind, his beloved Italy may, when he has gone, fall into the hands of impostors who will lead it to perdition? What controls can exist without measure? and how can we have measurement without accepting materialism, in a less crude form, of course, than that of its originators?

The Fascists will answer that you cannot measure everything. True. It is arguable that the intuitions governing the supreme decisions of human endeavour are largely unconscious, and therefore cannot be measured. Surely, the answer is that there is all the more reason to begin by measuring what we can; and

that when we have reached the limit of statistical persuasion we have arrived in a region where freedom and publicity of discussion is the more essential because there *is* no measurement to test our doubts or certainties. Our impulsive generalisations, and the sub-conscious appreciation of relationships in time, space and personality, which cannot be measured or subjected to sensuous demonstration, are precisely the factors which must be dragged into the public light by discussion, even bitter and apparently destructive discussion, dragged into the light and torn to pieces until the substance and limits of common consent are discovered. This is why the English and French have for two centuries understood the necessity of democracy. The proof of the substantial soundness of their outlook is that no dictator is sufficiently certain of the acceptability of his policy to allow other versions to be openly submitted to the judgement of popular intuition.

There are other implications of the Fascist repudiation of eighteenth-century materialism. Utopias are thrown into the waste-paper basket labelled " Impossible." The reconciliation of peoples is regarded as the characteristic illusion of imbeciles. Of course this is part and parcel of the earlier tangle of ideas on the inevitability of war, the baseness of " comfort " as an ideal of life. It is based upon a pessimism native to Mussolini and reinforced by his teachers. Now it is true that man in himself has changed little since the days of his rise from the slime. Yet, to dwell on this alone (which in its own time and place must not be neglected by the statesman, the social reformer, or the religious leader) is not enough. The victories over man's baser nature have been won by the services of man's social heritage of the physical and social sciences and the fabric and devices of government. As the Fascist leader says, man is not to be understood outside his history. Why then deny him the possibility of a Utopia and peace by the trick of ignoring what civilisation has passed down to him ? Has it not given him Rome ? Equally, it has bequeathed to him a social memory and equipment, making it easier and more desirable for him to subdue his baser nature, and to serve the nobler purposes which culture has revealed to him.

If perfection is declared to be utterly impossible of achievement, then the Fascist has said his last word, and he is not

logically exempt from the challenge that he should apply his own argument to his own case. Has he not his Utopias ? Of course he has. Does he expect to realise them ? No ! He merely sets them up as a mark, knowing that that is the destination, and that it is desirable that men should go forward in that direction even if they cannot stay the whole course. Other régimes have not demanded more. They have seen no less clearly that much that stands in the way of man's improvement is irrational and the result of egotisms, misunderstandings, false reasoning, faulty science, a warping, but amendable, natural and institutional environment. They believe also that the correction of these is well within human possibility, if men are at once energetic and patient, and that their cure will bring, not perfection, but considerable improvement. This is the real measure of the Utopias and the dream of human progress, of which the Fascists, while presenting the parochial politician's parody when their realisation lies in socialist or democratic hands, nevertheless feel the urgent compulsion. To make a Roman centurion out of a Neapolitan cabby ; or a Roman matron of the antique style out of the fox-trotting typist ! I would not sneer at such a Utopia !

Hence, although Fascism pretends to a virile superiority because it does not "put itself outside history," the claim is false. It picks and chooses its history, and weaves a vision of destiny out of the warp of its instincts and the weft of its experience of the outside world, just as all systems which have ever been. Its claim that it knows reality better than others is entirely without foundation. And this is the argument which Mussolini used so as to overthrow the parliamentary system which obstructed the expression of his own individual reading of reality !

> **"Politically Fascism aims at being a realistic doctrine ; practically it aspires to resolve only the problems that present themselves of their own accord and which of themselves find or suggest the proper solution. To act among men, as in nature, it is necessary to enter into the process of reality and to master the forces in actual operation."**

According to Mussolini's own annotations to these sentences, he means nothing more than that as problems emerge they will be dealt with energetically ; and that they would be dealt with

not according to any principle conceived and elaborated beforehand, not by obstinate attachment to any dogma, but I suppose by action appropriate to the nature of that particular problem. All this, however, is simply the relic of his expulsion from the Socialist Party, and the fight against their dogmas and promises, and, it may be, the vows he himself made in his socialist career. But the declaration is in contradiction to the whole purpose of the Essay itself. After all, every régime is flexible-minded in relation to the tasks of government, and democratic régimes, I think, most of all. For these are flexible to the pressure of all the interests which can enforce attention to themselves. Are we to understand from this that Fascism has no doctrine, no stream of tendency to inject into the direction of events? Reality does not tell you how to answer any problem; your heart and your head decide. Fascism prides itself upon the vigour and influence of its own free-will, its virile application of the "objective Will," and the moulding of the life of to-day and to-morrow by the admonitions of history. Why is this proud boast suddenly reversed? Surely Fascism is not unprincipled, so relative that it changes its attitude not only from day to day and problem to problem but also from sentence to sentence? Problems only present themselves of their own accord when they are the strokes and accidents of Nature; but we have not observed that the Fascist Government waits until then before it takes up the task of State dictation.

CHAPTER VII

THE ABSOLUTE SUPREMACY OF THE NATION-STATE

> **"Anti-Individualistic, the Fascist conception is for the State; and it is for the individual in so far as he coincides with the State, the universal conscience and will of man in his historical existence. It is opposed to classic liberalism which arose out of the necessity of reacting against absolutism and has exhausted its historical function as soon as the State was transformed in its own conscience and popular will. Liberalism denied the State in the interest of the particular individual; Fascism reaffirms the State as the true reality of the individual."**

FIRST and supreme is the State; then comes the State again, graciously allowing the individual's existence on condition that this pleases the State; and all that thereafter follows simply emphasises that there is nothing of importance but the State. Now the value of this depends upon the meaning attached to the term State by the Fascists, the examination of which follows after we have studied the full doctrine of the "all-inclusiveness" of the State.

For the moment we turn to the Fascist assault on classic liberalism. In my opinion Fascist criticisms betray either a want of historical knowledge, or a deliberate unwillingness to understand. It is not history to pretend that classic liberalism arose only out of the reaction against absolutism. It is true that the reaction against absolutism was the focus of all of mankind's instincts and reasons in favour of liberty of thought and action, and against unnecessary restraints upon the creativeness of the human spirit. Even if we omit the vast secular sweep of history, which shows that civilisation is coincident with the laborious ascent from the ant-like, unindividualised mass, to self-governing, free individuals, and merely concentrate our attention on the last four centuries of Western civilisation, we are yet able to see that the movement for liberty, beginning with the rise of

legitimate doubt in religious matters, became linked with the emancipation of property from arbitrary exactions by Church and King, and then proceeded ever further to reclaim the whole man from servility. It is the infinite creativeness and variety of the human being in all his manifestations that is being vindicated, not the simple reaction against autocracies. It is the pursuit of all that men like von Humboldt claimed for man in his *Sphere and Duties of the State*, "the absolute and essential importance of human development in its richest diversity." It is the demand for the elementary conditions of human dignity.

The Fascist thesis, which it must be remembered is an apology for the overthrow of a liberal system, skilfully leaves out of the account all the rich benefits of free creativeness in Art, free speculation in Science, philosophic doubt and invention, and what, logically, should be of particular pleasure to the Fascist, economic liberalism, which is given the first place in the famous Charter of Labour. Truly, this is too much to expunge from the slate ! Yet we must acknowledge that when the Fascist apologist feigns oblivion of all the values of liberalism, it betrays his secret recognition that he can find little or nothing of civilised worth to offer as a satisfactory compensation. I am of the strange opinion that human behaviour, especially when it involves other people's lives, must offer a reasoned justification, and that when this takes the form of a reading of history, the reading should not be false. Yet Mussolini has no qualms about contemptuously reversing all that historians and anthropologists have proved to us ! This to Mussolini represents the development of mankind hitherto :

> "If historic fact exists it is this, that all the history of man's civilisation, from the caves to civilised or so-called civilised man, is a progressive limitation of liberty."[1]

Those who have studied the matter have demonstrated the direct contrary, that history has shown the emergence of individuality from conglomerate masses in which the person was unrecognisably sunk in the crowd.[2]

The function of liberalism is not exhausted. Has the human mind, then, ceased to be ? Has the Italian mind lost its need to

[1] Gutkind, op. cit., p. 28.

[2] Cf. Heard, *The Growth of Individuality*.

develop ? It was Kant, I think, who said that though the social contract is not an historical truth, the hypothesis deserved invention in order that statesmen might act towards the people as its actual truth would have obliged them to act. The hypothesis of the social contract imposes a sense of trusteeship for the people. Reversing the tenor of this argument, Mussolini said on May 26th, 1927,

> " But, dear sirs, the opposition is in us, we are not old cushions which need beating. We severely control ourselves. Above all, we find the opposition in things themselves in the objective difficulties of life, which give us a vast mountain of opposition, which might exhaust spirits even superior to mine."

There is much truth in this view. The objects around us have their own silent intractability. No one, however, now believes in that fallacious socialist tag (invented, I believe, by Karl Marx) that the government of men will one day become the administration of things. Man's fate is involved even in the most trifling act of government. Therefore if Mussolini experiences opposition, it assuredly comes rather from the denials of men than the intractability of things. Let him be candid about the industrialists, the merchants, the bankers—and the workers ! He is driven constantly to learn that some of their refusals are nationally wiser than his own proposals. If there were nothing right in the opposition of other men, then, for example, the Corporations, the advisory bodies of the régime, would be unnecessary. Why then pretend that the need for liberalism has gone by ? The very forces of men's needs, not their reasonings, forces as elemental and right as are all the forces of nature, demand their free expression. Nor was it long ago, even in a free régime, that Mussolini himself publicly declaimed these ideas :

> " An Italy in which 36 millions of citizens should all think in the same way, as though their brains were all cast in the same mould, would be a madhouse or rather a kingdom of utter boredom and imbecility."

Nor is it any service to humanity or to the Italian people to talk, as the Fascist talks, as though *the individual* were in contrast to the State. What is demanded is freedom for *all*

individuals who form the nation. It is a demand that the State be composed by the spontaneous action and interaction of *all* free individuals. It is not a demand that *one* individual shall be allowed the right to overthrow the will of all, but that the freedom of all shall not be subjected to the whims of one or a few. As worded in the Fascist manner, " the individual only in so far as he coincides with the State," or " liberalism denied the State in the interests of the *particular* individual," the issue is distorted to make the individual seem a malefactor, and the State a god.

So we proceed to the apotheosis of the State :

> **" And if Liberty must be the attribute of the real man, and not of that abstract puppet excogitated by individual Liberalism, Fascism is for Liberty. It is for the only Liberty that can be a serious thing, the liberty of the State and of the individual in the State, since, for the Fascist, all is in the State and nothing human or spiritual exists and much less has any value outside the State. In this sense Fascism is totalitarian, and the Fascist State, the synthesis and unity of all values, interprets, develops, and gives power, to every aspect of the life of the people."**

Now the Fascist apologist pretends that liberalism is based upon " an abstract puppet," and not upon " real " man. This is by no means original. It has always been the favourite debating device of anti-democrats to pretend that the actual systems of liberal government ought to be condemned because they are based upon an untrue account of the nature of man. It is true, of course, that in the writings of democratic enthusiasts, especially of the optimistic end of the eighteenth and the early nineteenth century, Man was endowed with attributes not to be met with in actual men. A hundred years' experience of the government of men has gone far to correct the illusions about Man's natural wisdom and virtue. There were always sufficient democrats conscious enough of man's imperfections to prevent disasters ; and they knew enough about real men to know that the royal road to aggravate those imperfections was to govern them dictatorially. It is specious and dangerous to destroy one abstraction, the Man of the Democrats, and put in its place the no less abstract Man of the Fascists. It is unsound political science to pretend that the problems of the present day can be settled if we swallow the fallacy that contemporary democratic systems are

the uncritical embodiments of discarded abstractions. Has not Mussolini himself thundered against democrats, precisely because they became as crafty as those they governed were imperfect ?

What does Mussolini mean when he claims that the only liberty that can be a serious thing is the liberty of the State and of the individual in the State ? He means, according to a remark made to Emil Ludwig, that unless the State is strong, and not thwarted and worried by powerful individuals or groups, there is no liberty either for individual citizens ; that the condition of liberty for all is that there shall be a strong, unhampered, Government. The Governments of the time of Giolitti could not act because they were subject to threats of secession, and raked with a fire of criticism and denigration which never ceased to obstruct and humiliate them, and local " bosses " became the uncrowned kings over their weaker neighbours. Thus :

" In our state the liberty of the individual is not lacking. He possesses it more than isolated man : because the State protects him, he is a part of the State. But the isolated man is undefended " (Ludwig, *Colloqui*, p. 129).

This simple proposition taken by itself is unexceptionable. It is indeed, the foundation of John Locke's liberalism, for Locke proceeds to the argument that a Government is needed only in proportion as the individuals need protection against each other, *and no further*. Mussolini, however, will not stop here ; he proceeds from this point to unwind all the arguments that have ever been used as props for absolute systems. Hence the philosophy of Hobbes is the inspiration of the Fascist doctrine. All modern democracies, however, are Hobbesian as well as Lockian, for the simple reason that some propositions are common to both philosophers, and the massed strengths of accumulated property and associated workers is so great and liable to mutual attacks, that the strength of government is an essential of civilised existence.

Even in the age when the abstraction of the liberal puppet gave birth to democracy, Adam Smith already recognised that government is but an imperfect remedy for mankind's deficiency

of wisdom and virtue. All Governments to-day give considerable power to the executive ; all Governments strengthen the central authority in relation to the local authorities ; all Governments engage the will and the activity of individuals in a strong and fine web of laws and regulations. This is no discovery of Fascism. It is even problematical whether the Fascist system has as substantial an inward integration as democracies. For we must not take words for the spirit or for deeds ; we must not believe that because the democracies do not advertise with the blatancy, and even the calculated cynical untruthfulness, of the Fascist system that they are not responsive in their silent and effective reforms.

Mussolini has confused " strong " with " arbitrary." A strong Government is essential in the contemporary State; an arbitrary Government is still domestically and internationally pernicious. The statements of the apologist on the " necessary liberty " (in other words, the moral irresponsibility) of the State are, as so often in Fascist literature, based on an ignorance, often viciously simulated, of real truths in the government of other countries.

It is Fascism which continues to make a furious noise as though it were fighting against real and present dangers, instead of puppets and phantoms which democracies have long since discarded. This creed (if it is a *creed*) lacks temper and moderation, because it is not concerned to state the conclusions of a sober account of reality, but is engaged in creating a myth which shall work wonders in Italy. Other countries have already got those wonders. For Italians any humbug will do, so long as it works.

This leads us to the term State, the heart of the whole discussion. What does Mussolini mean by the State? He means Himself. A pattern of philosophic hocus-pocus is the medium for the transformation of the State into Benito Mussolini. It is not very elaborate, because he does not beat about the bush. Indeed, he cannot beat about the bush : that has been his peculiar strength in post-war Italian politics. He wills, and his will is the truth. He is not a conciliator. But it is amusing to see the pea and thimble trick played.

There are numerous different definitions of the State. Some regard the State as the power in a country which at a given

time can get its orders obeyed. Some regard the State as the whole community, acting in all the ways in which it is possible for a community to act, through all its institutions, whether the government or any other form of association. Some regard the State as the final supreme grouping in a given territory, acting as the governing framework, within which all the other groupings and individuals must fit their spontaneous activities. Others again regard the State as the social manager set up to secure that the various claims of groups and individuals in a community shall be carried out ; it is simply an intermediary deriving its strength, duties and resources from willing citizens, and effecting the exchanges of rights and duties which these think desirable. All of these definitions excepting the first, and even this also in certain circumstances, regard the State as a species of commonwealth or as its trustee. They regard the State either as a community or as a community's agent.

Not so the Fascist doctrine. All its definitions of the State make it coincident only with *the de facto government.* It is something above and separate from the governed. It is aloof and independent of their wishes. There are no citizens, that is components of the State, creators of the State. There are only subjects. The Government may, of course, in this scheme regard itself as a trustee, and may feel that philanthropy is incumbent upon it ; but then it is responsive not to the will of the people but only to its own conscience. We extract two of the more illuminating statements :

" The State is, ' A system of authorities or hierarchies . . . Whoever administers governs ; whoever governs is the State " (*Gerarchia*, June 25th, 1922).

" The keystone of the Fascist doctrine is the conception of the State, of its essence, its purposes, its ends. For Fascism the State is an absolute, before which individuals and groups are relative . . . A State which is based upon millions of individuals, who recognise it, feel it, are ready to serve it, is not the tyrannical State of the mediæval lords. It has nothing in common with the absolutistic States before and after 1789. The individual in the Fascist State is not annulled but rather multiplied, just as in a regiment a soldier is not diminished but multiplied by the number of his comrades. The Fascist State organises the Nation, but then leaves sufficient margins to the individuals ; it has limited the useless and noxious liberties and has

conserved the essential ones. The judge of such things cannot be the individual but only the State." (*Essay*, Part II.)

There are other passages of Mussolini's writings in which the term State is used as almost synonymous with the Nation ; but even this does not remove the substantial impression that the Fascist State is equated with the existing Government. As we shall shortly see, Mussolini is anxious to establish that *even one man* may represent the Nation better than all the mass of individuals. In the Fascist system, therefore, wherever we begin we always return to the central propositions : What is the final authority in this country ? The State. Who expresses what the State wants ? The Government. Who speaks the first and last word for the Government ? Mussolini. What, then, is the State ? Signor Mussolini.

> **"Neither individuals nor groups (political parties, associations, trade unions, classes) outside the State."**

Unless the State is conceived of solely as the Government of the day, as the Fascists conceive it, no one is ever outside the State. Then the pronouncement, "Neither individuals nor groups outside the State," can only mean that organised opposition to the Government is prohibited. The genuine constitutional issue is never whether people are within or without the State, but who is to participate in making decisions in the name of the State, and who, legally or actually, should collaborate, and in what measure, in the choice, control, and dismissal of Governments.

> **"Therefore Fascism is opposed to Socialism which rigidly casts the movement of history into the form of the class struggle and ignores the unity of the State which merges the classes into a single economic and moral reality ; and in the same way it is opposed to classic syndicalism."**

Here Mussolini has quietly retreated from the former definition of the State, which is now used as community or nation. If this is not detected, the Fascist can go on to say that the supersession of the class war should be in the hands of the existing Government. It can draw the veil over the possibilities of freely constituted harmony between the groups. It supports the *imposition* of unity. Fascist experience has shown that imposed uniformity of behaviour does not overcome the impulses to class

differences. Fascists have discovered that the imputation of the error of the class-war theory to the Socialists is not wholly just, because even twelve years after the advent of Fascism the Dictator continually complains that there is class-tension. Their remedy for this is "the continuing revolution"—Fascism is still to be a revolutionary movement. Socialists did not use the class-war theory as an end, but they were leading a movement towards a classless society. How unfortunate for Italy that Mussolini did not think between 1908 and 1914 as he talks now, and co-operate with his usual energy with the Socialist Reformist leaders who were then as wise as he has since become! However, just as he cried out for liberty long ago until he obtained it, only to deny it to others to-day, so his doctrine regarding the class-war has changed. As soon as Mussolini arrives in a situation where it is not in his own interest to be a critic but to demand obedience, then philosophy, history, the "objective will" and the rest, obligingly transfigure themselves.

It will be seen that Mussolini has thrown over "classic syndicalism" which he and many of his early friends propagated in Italy. They speedily recognised the danger to the State of government through a number of economic organisations each the master over the means of production and exchange in its own field, and friendly only in so far as they could reconcile their mutual difficulties of being independent without being really self-sufficient. Syndicalist theories, even in the weak form adopted by the English Guild Socialists, have long ago been rejected after a process of rational criticism.[1] In Italy, however, classic syndicalism has slipped into a new form, the theory and practice of Corporations. This form, because it is not the result of the free will of the parties to it, but the enforced creation of the Fascist Government, is as potentially disintegrative of the Italian nation as any other form of syndicalism. It is destined to be quite as dangerous as any syndicalist theory which does not postulate the primacy of the national will over the will of the separate syndicates. For reasons we shall appreciate later, Mussolini has abolished the institutions which permitted the free establishment of the will of the nation. He has placed himself in the supreme and central position once occupied by the

[1] Cf. Cole, *The Next Ten Years.*

Parliamentary expression of the will of the Nation. When Mussolini goes he must leave a void where once there was the voice which spoke for the whole nation against its parts. For the moment, he and his collaborators are satisfied that they have invented something epoch-making in the field of government. Thus :

> **"But within the orbit of the dominating State Fascism intends to recognise and give force to the real exigencies in which the Socialist and Syndicalist movement had its origin in the corporative system of interests conciliated in the unity of the State."**

This requires, and receives, extensive treatment in a later section of the work.[1]

> **"Individuals are classed according to the categories of interests ; they are put into syndicates according to the differentiated and co-interested economic activities ; but they are first and foremost the State. The State is not a number, the sum of the individuals forming the majority of the people. And therefore Fascism is opposed to democracy which identifies the people with the majority lowering it to the level of the greatest number. It is the purest form of democracy, if the people is conceived of, as it ought to be, qualitatively and not quantitatively, as the most significant because the most moral, coherent, and true idea that is actuated in the people through the conscience and will of a few, and even of One, which ideal tends to realise itself in the conscience and will of all."**

The Fascist denies the equality of man, and therefore the principle that government needs justification by the consent of the majority. He asserts, instead, the right and duty of a few, even of one, to govern others even against their will, on the ground that the will of the governors is more moral, coherent, and true than that of the majority.

The antithesis of People and Number has a local cause. The Fascists are anxious to wipe out the effect of Mazzini's call, *Dio e Popolo*, "God and the People," emphasising the sacred rights of the majority. Mazzini wanted a people free in relation to other peoples, and exercising their government freely at home. The Fascists have interpreted this to mean the people *en bloc*, free in relation to other nations, and not free domestic government. Mazzini, who was a Republican, is thus converted into a precursor of Fascism.[2]

[1] Chapter XVII. below.

[2] Cf. Rocco, op. cit.

Fascists robustly repudiate the view that all men are equally capable of giving a direction to the nation, or of judging the achievements of governments. It is idle to expect any extravagant flattery of the people from the Fascists. On the contrary, Mussolini, when on the road to Rome, took special pains to advertise the political incapacity of the common man. Let us glance at a sample of his discourses :

" *All* is the principal adjective of democracy, the word which has filled the twentieth century with itself. It is time to say : A few and chosen. Democratic equalitarianism, anonymous and grey, which forbad all colour and flattened every personality, is about to die " (February 25th, 1922).

" When any gentleman is furnished with a membership card, whether he has had it for a day or half a century, and so long as he is up to date with his subscriptions, he ceases *ipso facto* to belong to our poor common humanity. He becomes an elect being, someone set apart from others as a prophet, an apostle, a saint, a god ; all the wisdom all the virtues all the heroisms are to be found in him ! What he says, decides, does, or does not do, represents the maximum of wisdom. The cardboard has a magic power whereby imbeciles become geniuses, rabbits become lions, and the working masses must obey, blindly obey that which is decided by a handful of men. . . . There is a new God in the world—the membership card ! " (May 1st, 1919).

So much for the claim of the members of the Socialist Party to govern. And now the proletariat :

" Once there were courtiers who burned incense before the kings and the popes ; now there is a new breed, which burns incense, without sincerity, before the proletariat. Only those who hold Italy in their hands have the right to govern her, they say, while these do not know even how to control their own families. We are different. We use another language, more serious, unprejudiced and worthy of free men. We do not exclude the possibility that the proletariat may be capable of using its present forces for other ends, but we say that before it tries to govern the nation it must learn to govern itself, must make itself worthy, technically, and still more, morally, because government is a tremendously difficult and complicated task. The nation is composed of millions and millions of individuals whose interests clash, and there are no superior beings who can reconcile all these differences and make a union of life and progress. (*Sic !* Excepting Mussolini, who was willing to try.) (September 20th, 1920.)

And finally the coda of the Essay, Second Part:

"Fascism denies that the majority, by the simple fact that it is a majority, can direct human society, it denies that numbers alone can govern by means of periodical consultation, and it affirms the immutable, beneficial and fruitful inequality of mankind, which can never be permanently levelled through the mere operation of a mechanical process such as universal suffrage."

Mussolini then quotes from Renan to the effect that democracy is an extinguisher of "noble training, and that to accept the principle that society exists for the well-being and personal liberty of all the individuals would give the degenerate herd the pre-eminence with its satisfaction of the lowest desires of common men."

It is a pity that Mussolini does not follow Renan more closely than in such quotations, and act more in his spirit.

It will have been noticed that Mussolini charges modern democracy with the sins of the abstractions of Rousseau. It has already been shown that this is unfair to the contributions Rousseau actually made; and it is doubly fallacious when we recall that no democratic policy has ever been set up on the unqualified formulæ attributed to Rousseau. People knew human nature too well to imagine that the abstractions of Rousseau were dynamic representations of real men and their motives.

It is essential to the Fascist system that Fascists should misconstrue the nature of the principles laid down by the democratic theorists. These had a good reason for postulating the equality of man, and it had nothing to do with the actual truth of the proposition that all men are equal. After all, theirs *was* the age of Beccaria, the Italian, when the study of the criminal impulses of men began its scientific course. Nevertheless, they postulated the equality of man because they knew that without it there could be no limit to the presumptuousness of the most vain, the most sanguine, the most decided, the most ruthless, the most brutal, the most unscrupulous. Power will be abused if those who wield it are not made to answer for its use; and they can only be made to answer if the convention is adopted that other men are their equals. No one will be serious in his responsibilities to those he thinks weaker. If Mussolini would listen,

his attention might be called to one allocution of Renan's. It is the last paragraph of *Qu'est-ce qu'une Nation?*" "One thing more, Gentlemen; let the reign of the transcendants pass by ('infallible persons who pass their lives deluding themselves and who, from the height of their superior principles, take pity on our smallness';) let us know how to suffer the disdain of the strong. Perhaps after much unfruitful groping we shall return to our modest empirical solutions. The means of being right in the future is, in certain hours to know how to resign oneself to being unfashionable." No one will listen to the point of view of others unless he is convinced that they are not his inferiors. Democrats held that only the right of contingent disobedience, which could be made effective by the threat to impede or eject the existing government, could be the basis of a real answerability to the citizens at large. This was thought necessary because, even if in its inception a theocracy or an autocracy is benevolent and energetic, it possesses no *inherent* guarantees that it will remain so after the first impulse of its rise to power. It is one of the most serious fallacies of the whole Fascist system that it does not answer the question, does not even ask it, whether its "representative" quality can remain unimpaired over a long span of time unless it is an elected not a self-imposed government. Fascists seem to think that *their* line of rulers cannot degenerate—or they do not think about this at all.

Governments are too apt to forget their obligations, too liable to lose their sense of trusteeship for the whole nation, through personal incompetence or "interest-begotten prejudice." The democratic view depends on the notion that nothing is so corrupting in the long run as power: its mere possession removes the need to explain oneself. The absence of compulsion to explain oneself to critics involves the loss of the most powerful stimulus to self-questioning and self-correction.

That is the essence of the doctrine of the equality of men: that without it there is no force to compel responsibility. The meanest must be equated with the greatest, so that when the time comes the greatest shall be made to answer for the use of power, and not seek refuge in irrational claims to superiority. That is its social benefit. It has also its individual value as a spur to questioning, to take an interest in the *res publica*, to convert

oneself from a mere isolated animal into a living, thinking, active citizen. For the citizen is then assured that jacks-in-office will not be able to send him away on the pretext that he is an ignorant, meddling fellow, who ought to know better but does not, while the office-holder is the immediate representative of God, the Objective Will, the Nation, History and Science.

This is not all that can be said of the inner force of the democratic principle. When the democrats insisted upon equality they were by no means blind to the physical, intellectual, and moral differences among mankind. But they had in mind a distinction which can properly be made in the field of government: morals and technique, or concretely, politics and expertness. Every governmental policy is a combination of knowledge of technical fact, and the moral worth or significance ascribed to the facts. On the technical side, that is, where we are concerned with measurable, verifiable facts, or less verifiable sequences of generalisation and deduction, only the experts in actual possession of the facts, which may take long years of training to acquire, have the right of examination and judgement. Only those highly placed and able to survey the far-flung ramifications of government, beyond individuals, classes, even nations, only those close enough to the statistical and concrete data, can say what political reality is, and propose courses in conformity with their nature.

Yet, as Mussolini's own philosophy of intuitive truth ought to imply, all men are equal in the moral direction of government. Only the individual can say what the facts promise to him. No one on earth monopolises the exclusive, objectively right, moral standard. This is what Cromwell expressed in the phrase " the equality of consciences." Each conscience is worth as much or as little as any other, even if it is Mussolini's. There is a particle of uniqueness in each person, however degraded we think him or her to be; and this particle cannot be rejected on the ground that the whole man is inferior or distasteful to us. We may have something of inestimable value to offer to civilisation. People are more usually silent than forward: special encouragement is wanted to make them articulate. The surest encouragement to contributions to our common heritage is the offer of the equality of citizenship.

In other words, the principle of equality is a dynamic and creative principle, one that encourages the creativeness of all. In place of this all that Fascism has to offer is a creativeness centred in one man, the rest being enslaved (so far as that is possible to-day) to his will, the essential watchword of which is *Fede*, Faith !

The doctrine of equality does not, however, exclude hierarchies, the object of Fascist worship. The difference is that the democratic hierarchies are changing hierarchies. Those policies and persons which do not stand the pragmatic test of truth (that which Mussolini is *supposed* to favour) sink down in the course of several elections, while those which commend themselves to the various consciences rise. There is a perpetual testing. Nothing is taken on trust, though many policies and people compete for it. Everything is on suspicion ; is obliged to justify itself ; and this is all to the good. In the democratic hierarchies, those are given honour who have mastered the technical facts and are able, in the competition of the market, to persuade others that they have correctly done so. The political fight is not fought on the details of the abstruse techniques which government uses to get its decided will done, but upon the broad directions proposed by the politicians as the proper aims of civilisation. The Civil Servants supply the facts. The ordinary man is not the equal of such experts when it comes to the technical issues, but he is equal to the politicians, and to all his fellowmen, who aspire to govern their society, because he has a conscience which is not to be despised. That is the meaning of equality as propounded by the democrats. *Mussolini has wittingly or unwittingly missed this truth,* and therefore has founded his policy upon the denial of a thesis (the *actual* equality of men) which no one was ever foolish enough to assert and, still less, to use in the establishment of a system of government.

There is yet another meaning of equality. Mussolini has in mind the " equality " of the Socialists. He has taken great pains to destroy this social principle. But surely he himself spent many energetic years trying to secure a greater equality by the improvement of material conditions of life for the poor of Italy. Why did he do this ? The reason, and it is altogether to his credit, is this. All around him he saw splendid characters and talents for

art, science and government wantonly wasted, and self-respect destroyed, by conditions of poverty which were not inherent in the nature of things, but the effects of systems of inheritance, property, and government which had no necessity about them. They were instruments well designed for exploitation. He saw that changes in these institutions, the provision of equality of opportunity, equality before the law, and so on, would release energies for the bettering of civilisation as yet unsuspected by the upper and middle classes who lay on top of the structure in a slumber induced by too many comfortable privileges. What he saw then was reality. How, then, can he now flee from the consequences of his vision? Is it not rather the intoxication of writing an Essay which has imposed this repudiation on him, the necessity of making inconsistent things seem consistent, a stubbornness still against the Socialism from which he appears to have fled? But the essential Mussolini is not that which appears here. The cry to the Socialist Congress of 1914 which expelled him, that "one remains a Socialist even when one's membership card is taken away, for Socialism is something which grows into the roots of the heart," that cry is the dominant note of Mussolini still. All the rest is polemical; it is put into the window to make people forget the other stock-in-trade of Socialism—parliament, elections, freedom of thought, and so on. We shall see later that in the last two years he has returned to the ideas of "Social Justice" from which he strayed in order to induce the wealthy to entrust him with power![1]

If the Fascist doctrine repudiates the democratic system, and the equality upon which it is founded, and looks for quality rather than quantity, how does it organise its government? Clearly they will seize the government who can. The passage under discussion says that a few, or even One, may be better, more coherent, more fully possessed of truth, than all the rest put together. By what sign shall we know Him? By what sign shall the Italian people of future generations know Him, when Mussolini has departed? To this, Fascism has no answer. None. If we read an answer from its record, it is that those who have the cudgels and the machine-guns are the élite, who represent God and the Nation and the State and the Objective Will

[1] Chapter on "The Corporations and Economic Policy," below.

to boot. This is not a parody. Fascism gives no authentic sign, other than this. All the alternative guides, such as political parties, or the Church, or employers' associations, or trade unions, are disqualified as the examiners of the signs of political merit. The Fascist believes that there is no valid guide to the right to govern other than the seizure of power. This is particularly insidious doctrine, as the Fascists wish the State to be regarded not merely as an entity with present-day interests, but as having a life and purposes continuing over the generations. In the coming generations, how shall Italians know what is a good government ? It is surely not enough to say, either " I do not care ! " or " My principles will have made Italians able to continue their government without dissension." The latter answer, which is often given, takes for granted two highly problematic things : that the principles are clear enough to be known, and that they satisfy everyone equally well.

The mind of Mussolini, as of other Fascists, seems to me to have been too much affected by certain generalisations made by Gaetano Mosca[1] and Vilfredo Pareto. These maintain that all history shows the emergence from the mass of men of a few who are specially willing and able to undertake the work of government. They inevitably come to the top because of their superior aptness or intenser will to govern. They may be scoundrels ; no *moral* superiority is implied by their success. Yet society needs such a select body and inevitably gets it. From this particularly simple generalisation, the Fascists have deduced their own indispensability. They have included themselves in the historical generalisation. Mosca told me that some earnest American students, with large round spectacles, begged him to explain the difference between his term " governing class " and Pareto's term élite. His answer to them was, " The élite is simply the governing class dressed up in its best clothes and giving itself the air of being better than other people." He did not, of course, apply his answer to the situation in Italy.

The idea of an élite developed very strongly in Mussolini during the War, and especially when he was observing the troops in the trenches and we have already given ample attention to this.

[1] Cf. *Elementi di Scienza politica*, first published 1895.

But it is not inappropriate to quote the famous article in his aptly named journal *Gerarchia*, (Hierarchy) where Mussolini, speculating on the hierarchical nature of government and discipline, says :

" Whoever says hierarchies is committed to a scale of human values ; whoever says a scale of human values says a scale of human responsibilities and duties ; who says hierarchy says discipline. History offers us the panorama of hierarchies which arise, live, transform themselves, decline and die " (January 25th, 1922).

One man must stand at the top, like the pilot on the vessel—the ancient analogy, that for thousands of years has been a picturesque fallacy. The State is *not* like a vessel at sea.

> **" ' All ' means all those who see reason for forming a nation on natural, historical and ethnical grounds, and proceed along the same line of spiritual development and formation, as one conscience and will. Not a race, nor a geographically distinguished region, but as a community historically perpetuating itself, a multitude unified by an idea, which is the will to existence and power, self-consciousness, personality. This superior personality is truly the nation in so far as it is the State. It is not the nation that generates the State, according to the musty naturalistic conception which served as the basis of the controversies regarding the National States of the nineteenth century. Rather is the nation created by the State which gives to the people, conscious of its own moral unity, a will and therefore an effective existence. The right of a nation to independence derives not from a literary and ideal consciousness of its own existence and even less from a de facto situation more or less unconscious and inert, but from an active consciousness, from a political will in operation and disposed to prove its own right ; that is to say, of a sort of State in the making. The State, in fact, as the universal ethical will, is the creator of law (or right)."**

Thus, the Fascist régime puts on its third disguise ; the first was God ; the second History ; the third is the Nation. For the Government is the State, and the State is the Nation. The cycle is complete, and all that was in Italy, all that is, and all that will be, is properly in the hands of the Fascist Party obeying the orders of the Duce.

The Nation as the supreme ethical unit dominates the Fascist scheme of values. If it was true to say of Spinoza that he was God-intoxicated, it is true to say of Mussolini that he is Nation-intoxicated. Nationalism grew especially intense in Italy as a

result of Italy's peculiar relation to the World War. In Italy less than anywhere else was patriotism taken for granted. It had to be created by a special agitation. The agitators and their followers were committed to their own pronouncements, and had to continue as though they believed in them. They had to advance even beyond their original enthusiasms in order to energise the people to achieve those victories which alone would justify their prophecies. If nationalism was more fiercely inflammatory in Italy than elsewhere, pacifism and internationalism were also embraced with all the intemperance of a passionate, impressionable and generous people. Anti-internationalist propaganda therefore took on especially acute and exaggerated form. One can trace in Mussolini the development of nationalism to the point of fanaticism :

" Here no one says ' I am going back to my own district.' We say we are going back to Italy. Thus Italy appears, perhaps for the first time in the consciousness of so many of its children, as a single and living reality : in other words as the common Motherland " (October 16th, 1915).

" We commence from the concept of the Nation, which is for us a fact which cannot be cancelled or surmounted. We are therefore antithetic to all the internationalisms. The dream of a great humanity is founded on a Utopia and not upon reality. Nothing gives us the authority to affirm that the millennium of universal brotherhood is imminent. In spite of the dreams of the *internationale*, when the great hours strike, those who deny their country die for it. Starting from the Nation, we arrive at the State, which is the government in its tangible expression. But we are the State : by means of a process we wish to identify the Nation with the State " (November 7th, 1921).

" And this Fascist revolt, and we could also use the more sacred and serious word revolution, is inspired by indestructible and moral motives, and has nothing to do with incentives of a material nature. We Fascists say that above all the competition, and those differences which divide men—and which might also be called natural and inevitable since life would be extraordinarily dull if everybody thought the same way—above all this there is a single reality, common to all, and it is the reality of the nation and of the country to which we are bound, as the tree is bound by its roots to the soil which nourishes it. Thus, whether you like it or not, the country is an indestructible, eternal and immortal unity, which like all ideas, institutions and

sentiments in this world, may be eclipsed for a time, but which revives again in the depths of the soul, as the seed thrown in the soil bursts into the flower with the coming of the warmth of spring " (Ferrara, April 4th, 1921).

Now " The Nation " is, next to the standard of living, the most efficient instrument of regimentation available to modern statesmen. It is vague enough to overcome critical doubts ; it is not so ill-defined as international loyalty ; it is sufficiently provocative of defensive emotions to permit conscription and the painless extraction of taxes for military purposes. In our own day it is possible to demonstrate that defence requires the regimentation of every aspect of national life. Where does the belligerent end and the citizen begin ; where do war industries end and ordinary industries begin ; where does military strength finally repose if not on the basis of industry, commerce and agriculture, all geared to the wheel of the war chariot ? The immediate mind, senses, and interests of most men and women are engaged necessarily in their own family, locality and trade. It is very difficult to rise to cosmopolitan loyalties. It is easier to evoke the response you want for selfish purposes by praising this intermediate stage between the village or the town and the great vague world beyond the frontiers.

How perfect a political tool which enables the Fascist politician to go out into the streets and to say to every man, noble or depraved, " It is true that I think you incapable of governing yourself ; it is true, as I have declared repeatedly and loudly that you are an ignorant, demoralised lout, with neither conscience nor intellect ; it is clear that when it comes to the point, I think your life is worth nothing. Yet (slapping him on the shoulder) you are a great man ! For you are an Italian ! You are the inheritor, the possessor, and the defender of a civilisation far superior to anything outside this country if you should happen to look, and if you should happen to be clever enough to understand what you see. You are brave ; they are cowards. You are artistic ; they are vulgar, and even barbarians. You have wit ; they are dull and heavy tongued. You are hardworking and peaceful ; they seek to outwit, exploit, and encircle you. You are a wonderful fellow, a direct descendant

of a people which has been the glory of the world, which has given laws, culture, and civilisation to all the nations of the earth. You are magnificent! Your very physique, your open eye, your frank open brow, your classic features, your power to endure all sacrifices with patience—I worship them, and these you should worship, also. They must be devoted to the welfare of our own great group, so that you and I may pass on to our children, and children's children, what we have inherited from our fathers." This is the perfect political confidence-trick. If these moments of conceit can be multiplied and converted into an unending flux by propaganda, which is not only incessant and completely enveloping but is also protected by dictatorial methods from question, the new God can make the average man always feel sacrificial.

Thus Mussolini, who is almost always frank :

" We have created our myth. The myth is a faith, it is passion. It is not necessary that it shall be a reality. It is a reality by the fact that it is a goad, a hope, a faith, that it is courage. Our myth is the Nation, our myth is the greatness of the Nation! And to this myth, to this grandeur, that we wish to translate into a complete reality, we subordinate all the rest " (Naples, October 24th, 1922).

What is the Nation? This is an abstraction not less phantasmic than the " individual " of eighteenth-century liberalism, about which the Fascist apologist grows so shrill. It is even more abstract than the individual : for we can see a person, we can experience a person in ourselves, but—a Nation? In the name of Phantasms of this kind, indeed, almost anything can be postulated and commanded. The swelling, lovely bubble can be filled with our own reflections, while, as in a bubble, all the rest in the background fades away into the nothingness around the little horizon. Even as the " objective Will " is another name for Mussolini, even as History is but another disguise for Mussolini, so is the Nation but one more aid to smothering other wills by non-rational means.

Thus we arrive at the First Declaration of the Charter of Labour, of April 1927,[1] which is rather the Charter of the Nation than of Labour :

[1] Cf. Chapter XVII. below.

" The Italian Nation is an organism endowed with purposes, a life, and means of action transcending in power and duration those of individuals, singly or grouped, which compose it. It is a moral, political, and economic unity, which realises itself in the Fascist State."

Yet there is some value in the Fascist conception. The Nation is a beneficial phenomenon also, in default of a wider loyalty. The integration of economic and social effort is valuable. Hence the modern trend towards centralised or " planned " and co-ordinated activity. Yet the democratic way here, also, is co-ordination by free collaboration. In so far as Fascism represents this element it is beneficial. It is also reasonable to demand a respect for the culture of the national group and the claims which follow to a share in the material resources of the world. Exaggeration, however, is deplorable, especially when it takes the shape of a root and branch denial of the hopes of international government.

As to the claim that the State is the creator of law or right we must distinguish between actual law and morality. Law is the creation of the State. It may declare what it conceives to be justice or morality. What the State utters, however, is only a command or a prescription. This is not necessarily just or moral. And as we have pointed out, we believe that there will be a lower morality where the State is equated with a dictatorial Government than where the pronouncements of the Government are subject to free and universal criticism.

The Fascist apologist is especially anxious to convince us that the State makes the Nation. This anxiety is due to the attempt to found the supreme right of the State, that is the Government, that is Mussolini, on something other than the collaboration of the people. A nation, in fact, is made by a long series of actions, some deliberate and some unconscious. If it is a cultural group, then it is compounded of the language, manners, customs, literature, traditions, the total sense of its past, the art, the science, the songs, the physical configuration and the climate of the country, its products, and the physical and psychological qualities of the people. What have Italy's blue skies, olives, pines, and vineyards not done to make the Nation ? Who will dare to assert that these were made, or can be made, by the State,

especially when the State is defined as the Government for the time being? Spontaneous needs give rise to a framework to secure order and peace, and gather the whole of the nation to concerted tasks in relation to other nations. Then when the State is built, if it is able in organisation and character, it may add to the heritage of culture. If it is very powerful, if it is able, in fact, to secure a response from the nation, even by fear, it may make great additions to the collective culture. Should the State impose its will by main force against the spontaneous intuitional inspiration of the people, it will breed cowardice, and it must expect the people to become hypocritical, to give the appearance of conformity while secretly stealing their way out of the commands of the Government. The laws may be openly laughed at. People may lose the stimulus to being, and therefore the responses of, a self-governing and self-controlling people.

One ought not to be enslaved by the brilliant phrases of dead statesmen. I surmise that the vindication of the State as the maker of the Italian nation arises from the nature of the Italian Risorgimento, in which a few people, the Savoy monarchy, its statesmen, and certain others, set out to produce Italian unity. It is conveniently forgotten that the constituted State of Savoy was only one of many factors which made the Kingdom of Italy; and that the making of the Kingdom, as Mussolini should acknowledge, was not the making of the cultural unit, Italy. This already existed, and was known and loved centuries before the Risorgimento and Fascism. It is true that the Savoy dynasty was not helped by the masses; the Fascist claim that the "nation did not make the nation" therefore seems to be true. Thousands of enthusiasts did. Yet this only means that nations are stimulated by the activity of their most potent, wilful, enthusiastic and creative members. They are the leaven, but the quality of the loaf is also determined by the mass. The State is narrower than the total amount of creative energy in the nation. Mussolini and his friends are parts of the nation; through the organs called the State, they, as members of the nation, are making exceptionally potent contributions to the nation. This is a triumph for the resources of the nation, not of the State; for the State did not produce Mussolini; or, would he admit that the liberal State did produce him? The nemesis of the Fascist

conception of the State is that it would forbid the creative contribution of those, like the Mussolinis of bygone days, who have the talent, in the Italian character since they are Italians, to add to the culture which is theirs and in whose midst they live. The Fascist doctrine that only the State makes the Nation, is historically wrong, psychologically obtuse, and politically paralysing. The Fascists ought perhaps to rid themselves of the incubus of D'Azeglio's dictum :

"We have made Italy, now it is necessary to make the Italians."

The thesis that all Italian history begins and ends with Fascism is hardly true.

Italian Fascism is distinguished from German Nationalism by its rejection of the *racial* basis of the State. Mussolini says, " Race ! It is a feeling not a reality ; ninety-five per cent, at least, is a feeling. Nothing will ever make me believe that biologically pure races can be shown to exist to-day."[1] It is, of course, true that the original Nordic doctrine was not complimentary to the Italians who were regarded as a degenerate constituent of the Latin peoples, all of whom were inferior to the Nordics. " Chamberlain actually declared that Rome was the capital of chaos ! " exclaims Mussolini.

After Mussolini had patronised Hitler for some years, the German dictators became truculent with their Latin friend, and Mussolini was obliged to have articles written in the Italian Press on the stupidity of racialism.

> **" The Nation as a State is an ethical reality which exists and lives in the measure in which it develops. Its standstill is its death. For the State is not only authority which governs and gives form to the laws and the value of spiritual life to the individual wills, but it is also power which gets its will accepted abroad. Getting it recognised and respected, in other words, proving its universality by facts in all the necessary directions of its manifestation. Hence at least a virtual organisation and expansion. Thus it may be likened to the human will which in its development does not recognise barriers and realises itself proving its own infinity."**

The State can do everything it likes ; it has all purposes, all means, no limits. This sounds rather more plausible when the State has already been equated with the nation, or even defined

[1] Ludwig, op. cit., English translation, p. 73.

as the creator of the nation. The denial of barriers to the will of the State may be another way of implying that the State in relation to other States has no moral responsibility, and that the government at home is not bound by any ethic superior to its own will in its relations with its subjects.

> **"The Fascist State, the highest and most potent form of the personality, is force, but spiritual. This spiritual force includes all the forms of the moral and intellectual life of man. It cannot therefore be limited to simple functions of order and supervision, as Liberalism proposed. It is not a simple mechanism which limits the sphere of presumed individual liberties. It is an interior form and norm, and disciplines the whole person; and penetrates the will no less than the intelligence. Its principle, the central inspiration of the human personality living in the civil community, descends into the deeps and makes its home in the heart of the man of action as of the thinker, of the artist as of the scientist: the very soul of the soul."**

One of the most usual and well-merited criticisms of the Fascist view of the State is its ready approval of Force and Violence in the process of Government. The proposition that the Fascist State is "Spiritual Force," cannot be accepted after frank examination of the actual methods by which the Fascists seized power, and the means by which they keep it. Force was used to win; Force and Fear are used to hold. We are far from denying that there was spiritual power in the Fascist movement. However ignorant or mistaken about liberty and the parliamentary system, many Fascists were moved by generous passions, ready even to take grave risks, if not directly to offer their lives, for their cause.

Yet it is untrue that the Fascists are a spiritual force exclusively, or even in the largest part. The system reposes firmly upon a basis of actual or threatened violence. Now what is the Fascist doctrine of violence?

Mussolini, in an article with the promising title *Force and Consent* (1924) achieves no more than the statement that the world has never seen a system of government which could entirely dispense with force. But this does not prove enough, namely, that machine-guns should be the principal element of a constitution. This, however, is what Mussolini maintained at one time; and this is what he would sustain and what the Fascist Militia would speedily demonstrate, the moment

disobedience reared its head. In his article the heart of the matter is put thus :

"Was there ever a government in history that was based exclusively on the consent of the people and renounced any and every use of force. A government so constituted there never was and there never will be. Consent is as changeable as the formations in the sands of the seashore. We cannot have it always. Nor can it ever be total. No government has ever existed that made all its subjects happy. Whatever solution you happen to give to any problem whatsoever, even though you share the Divine wisdom, you would inevitably create a class of malcontents. . . . How are you going to avoid that this discontent spread and constitute a danger for the solidarity of the State ? You avoid it with force : by bringing a maximum force to bear ; by employing this force inexorably whenever it is rendered necessary. Rob any government of force and leave it with only its immortal principles, and that government will be at the mercy of the first group that is organised and intent on overthrowing it. Now fascism throws these lifeless theories on the dump heap. When a group or a party is in power it has the obligation of fortifying itself and defending itself against all."

Now Mussolini is too sane to advocate violence without measure or cause, for he is a humane man. Hence, as we have seen, he developed various rules to control the use of violence. It ought not to be directed against persons; it ought not to be merely revengeful; it ought to be chivalrous ; it ought to be timely, proportioned to its object, of surgical value. Even with these limitations, the prominence of the doctrine is a serious danger to civilisation, by which I mean the continuous possibility of the maximum of spontaneous creativeness with the minimum of necessary external control to assure it. Men need no encouragement to be violent. They need no special permission to throw off all the burden of restraining their ferocity. On the contrary, men's natural disposition is to solve problems by force. Mussolini sneers at liberalism, which tied itself in so many Gordian knots before the War came to cut them. Civilisation is composed of Gordian knots, tied because men wish to preserve life and the promptings of reason. It is much easier to remove an opponent by physical force or cunning. The inventors and the patient thinkers have always had to be safeguarded from the bludgeoning mass of mankind. The truth is applicable to governments, which

are charged with the peaceful maintenance of millions of connections between individual, group, local, national and international units, and between the many diverse interests of each human life. Compromise and conciliation are of the essence of peaceful and tolerant government, and yet they are almost impossibly difficult to ensure without the possession of extraordinary qualities of brain and personality. In a free society there may at any moment come a change in the conditions of loyalty for any of the multitude of interests in the existing equilibrium. What a happy world for the statesman if he could sweep away all difficulties, silence the demand for explanations and persuasion, cease the running to and fro between the interests to be conciliated, and if he were able to threaten, and to have at hand a gospel and weapons, to suppress all irreconcilable objectors! In 1922 the Italian nation had involved itself in such a tangle of economic and spiritual muddles that it went into a convulsion of violence to escape from it.

Violence is the easiest of all lessons to teach successfully. The doctrine spreads swiftly, and may one day punish the teacher who first disseminated it. It may as easily be turned by wicked men against good, as by good men against wicked; by the brute with cudgel, revolver and machine-gun, as by the saint who is sufficiently fanatical to want to exterminate the men he cannot lead. Violence puts an embargo on reason, and a premium on sheer brute strength. Is this the bequest of Fascism to the Italian Nation?

The Fascist will reply that he did not mean to include violence as part of the normal teaching of his system, that he intended rather a spiritual force and the use of violence as an exception at turning points of the nation's career when there was no way out but force, and that he has suitably hedged its use about with conditions and limitations. This answer is, however, not sufficient. Those who preach violence are under the obligation to remember the weaknesses of those to whom they teach it. Angels do not need to use violence; beasts have no alternative; but men are in between, and a word may sway them this way or that. To the ordinary man violence is violence, and no damned nonsense about it; violence is brutality, without conditions.

The passions aroused by the use and suffering of violence are not easily cooled ; they make it very difficult, if not impossible, to return to patience and reason. The more successful the violence the more difficult for both victors and vanquished to return to reason. For men can understand success much more easily than they can apprehend the quality of righteousness and the conditions of truth. The results of the successful application of violence in Italy are to be seen in an almost direct line of cause and effect in the Hitler régime in Germany, the reign of terror in Austria, and the beginnings of violence elsewhere. When I was asked in Rome by some young Fascist friends what I thought of the advent of the Hitler régime, I replied to them that I deplored its brutality. They swiftly answered that force was the everlasting law of mankind ; that even England had had her Black and Tans, and did not hesitate to be violent to weaker peoples. They were indeed well prepared with their apologies. My heart sank, for I knew that this was true. It sank even lower when I reflected on the whole cycle of force : the ancient dynasties and therefore the revolutions, and therefore the violence of reaction, and therefore revolution again ; the overturn of the Tsardom in so much bloodshed, and the continuance of terror in Russia ; and therefore, in part, the contagious effect on Italy, and therefore upon Germany and therefore upon Austria. Where will it end ?

Those who actually preach violence have a terrible responsibility ; and the philosophic leaders of the world like Mussolini should realise this and teach men not violence but its opposite. The doctrine of violence which was passed on to Germany by the Fascist teachers, has already had its lesson for Italy, for the power which has there founded itself upon violence openly mocks its Italian teachers, and those who used violence in the Nazi cause in Austria used Mussolini's arguments to justify their murder of Dollfuss, Mussolini's friend. I cannot remember without regret Mussolini's defence of the Hitler régime which appeared in his article entitled " Between two Civilisations " (August 22nd, 1933). He welcomes the appearance of Germany in the list of Fascist countries. " The other force which has thrown into mortal peril all the principles of the past century, has been the triumph of Hitler's movement in Germany. . . .

Here is another great country which creates a unitary, authoritarian, totalitarian, that is a Fascist State, *with certain accentuations*, which Fascism spared itself, having to act in a different historic situation." The German people did not know the full story of the Nazi brutalities, but Mussolini was well enough informed. How could he condone this use of violence? The incident proves that when violence is preached it should be remembered that there are listeners. Since their character is very difficult to gauge, while the effects of violent passions are unmistakable, it is the wiser part of statesmanship not to preach violence at all. If one must begin with any general proposition it is wiser to begin with the absolute outlawry of force, and the absolute commandment of universal consent, and then make the unavoidable exceptions with caution and penitence.

This course will only commend itself to those who regard human life as sacred. This the Fascist does not do. What is a human life that its extinction is iniquitous? It is not merely the life of a man, but all potential creativeness. Judged by the particular standard of a church, or a political creed, or a scheme of æsthetics, a man may be noxious. He is, however, never entirely condemnable. Some part of him, even in the most absolute of repudiations, is worth preserving. Another consideration is material. No standard lasts for ever. Most standards are very short-lived, not merely because the spiritual factor changes with the change in the composition of human character in the new generations (which, by the way, are in the making and unmaking, not completely each score of years, but little by little, every minute), but because environment also changes. What is now horrifying in its wickedness, may in a very short time indeed be worshipped as the highest good. When society destroys life, it destroys the seed of its own renewal. I refer not only to the perpetuation of life by giving birth to children who shall inherit and transmit ancestral tendencies, but to the influence of one human being on others, more often than not as the undeliberate inarticulate expression of personality, an expression of the face, a gesture, a reticence, which affects those who surround us. Who can find valid grounds for destroying such potentialities? Bernard Shaw has confessed that Eugenics is impossible because

it is impossible to give a completely convincing prescription of the ingredients of the perfect man. How can one give a completely convincing prescription of the grounds for taking life? What is Shaw doing among the homicides? Or, to be more polite, among those who dispassionately recommend "liquidating" lives, as they would exterminate weeds in a garden. What is a weed among human beings? We are as completely at a loss to answer as we would be if we attempted to define the Superman. In a society founded on violence, the first people to be exterminated as noxious weeds would have been Mussolini and Bernard Shaw in the days of their primal heresies.

Naturally, it is asking very much of humanity that they should subdue the impulses to violence and the temptation of Cain, for the alternative is the burden of thought and the patience of Sisyphus. If, however, it is really intended that the human spirit shall soar to the very zenith, if, as Mussolini has recently reiterated for the thousandth time, it is the struggle and not the victory which gives nobility to life, if duties and self-sacrifice, which Fascism declared to be the only worthy objects of life, are clearly conceived and sincerely meant, if it genuinely prefers the dangerous and difficult life to the smug and easy one, then violence and homicide are roads it should *not* travel. For killing, whatever pleasanter word is used for it, is always murder; and it is too easy a means of government for self-respecting men to employ. The credit of government is not in proportion to the courage to bear the remorse which succeeds blood-stained hands or conscience, but the labour inherent in the task itself and the intensity of the strain to master it. Blessed is the people which cherishes its heretics.

After his assertion that the Fascist system rests upon spiritual force, Mussolini proceeds that the State cannot be limited to a simple function of safeguarding order, as was maintained by classic Liberalism. Once more, in so far as other countries are concerned, Mussolini falls into the error of fighting a principle which was long since rejected by the democratic method itself as soon as the environment and the evolution of the social conscience made a change desirable. The old liberalism is indeed gone; and it went long before Fascism arose to level a sensational kick at its shadow.

In the later passages relating to the Fascist proposal to penetrate the will and intelligence of the entire person, the method, education, is at any rate not new. The earliest liberals discarded all State activity but one, and this they regarded as the very foundation of their power to make liberalism work, so little were they convinced of the original perfection of man : education. State education was proposed because it was realised that the operation of self-interest without enlightenment as to the dangers of its excesses to the rest of the public, and the individual himself, would be destructive. It was believed that the real nature of man and our environment could be discovered by careful analysis (the *reality* that Fascism so often mentions) ; that the laws of nature could be discovered ; that wise living in society as well as for oneself, was the result of following nature ; that the best dynamic creative result was to be found in a liberty complete save for the necessary education in these laws of nature. The Fascist apologist has distorted the liberal view so grotesquely that he must, if he takes it seriously, be deceiving himself.

Fascism evidently intends to consider every aspect of life amenable to the jurisdiction of the Government, should the Government consider it in the national interest to regulate it. This is not different from the doctrine of the State now generally accepted. The difference between Fascism and democracy in this matter is that, in democracies, the State and the Government are always on their trial, in order that the "national" interest may be really intended, and that its meaning shall be discovered and tested by the frank and independent opinion of all who have an interest in the result.

> **"In brief Fascism is not merely a law-giver and founder of institutions but an educator and promoter of the spiritual life. It aims at rebuilding not the forms of human life, but the content, man himself, character and faith. To this end it requires discipline and authority which penetrates into the mind, and rules there unopposed. Its sign therefore is the Lictor's rods (the Fasces), the symbol of unity, of force and of justice."**

The word "Faith" proclaims all that is good and all that is evil in the Fascist system. It is repeated all over the country, in wood and stone, painted and graven. It has a Catholic ancestry ; from

one superstition to another is not a long step. The brand of Fascism is FAITH. The democratic mark is CREATION.

We now turn to an examination of Fascist achievement and institutions, and in this investigation we shall have the opportunity of discovering, not only how far these doctrines are effective or can ever become effective (that is how far they are really shared by the masses), but also to appreciate further elaborations and refinements of the doctrines themselves.

Part IV

The Organs of Government

Chapter VIII

THE SUPPRESSION OF OPPOSITION

The Fascist idea of the State could not be more concisely stated than in the speech which Mussolini made at the close of the discussion on the new law on the Corporations, before the Assembly, in December 1933. It provides a very convenient point of departure for the discussion of the practice of Fascism. Mussolini said :

" Three conditions are necessary for the full, complete, integral, and revolutionary fulfilment of the Corporate State : A single party, by means of which there shall be effectuated political control as well as economic control, and which shall be, above the competing interests, a bond which unites all in a common faith. Nor is that enough. We must have, as well as the single party, the totalitarian State, that is to say, the State which absorbs in itself, to transform and make them effective, all the energy, all the interests, and all the hope of a people. And even that is not enough. The third, and ultimate, and the most important condition, is to live a period of the highest ideal tension. We are now living in this period of high ideal tension."

All these conditions seem to me to be compressible into one : a single party engaged in the excitement of the people, since " highest ideal tension " means nothing more than a state of excitement. Our fundamental problem, then, is to discover the nature, organisation, and operation of the Fascist Party, for even a cursory enquiry into the Fascist State reveals that all the other institutions, with the partial exception of the Law Courts, are direct emanations of the Fascist Party. They are little else but the Fascist Party in another guise, dressed up and differently named (though even this often needs qualification) but always talking the same language as the Party, and,

in public, if not in perennial and private, harmony with the other agencies of government. The soul, the dynamo, the inward wheels, and the wheels within wheels, are there : the vent pipes, the effluents, the windmills and the outer formal instruments are in the other organs of government. The Fascist Party is fundamental, pervasive, and final. This can only be demonstrated, however, by an examination of the true nature of the surrounding State mechanism.

Let us begin by examining the Destruction of the Opposition. We saw that the value of an opposition recognised as necessary to the health of the State, is decisively repudiated by Mussolini. His clearest expression to this effect came after the attempts on his life in 1926 ; and in May 1927, suitable " police " measures having already been taken to cope with adversaries brave enough to speak out, he defended his attitude thus :

" No, this is not terror, it is hardly rigour. Perhaps it is only social hygiene, national prophylactics. These individuals are taken out of circulation as the doctor removes an infected person from circulation."

The opposition leaders imagined that after a few months of vigorous government, armed with " emergency " powers conceded by Parliament in November 1922, Mussolini would become a mild and docile parliamentary leader. Neither he nor the Fascist leaders had this intention. The Fascist Militia was founded, to make the régime different from all others. Terrible murders of working men occurred in Turin in December 1922. The Fascist bosses ruled in their cities. Affrays still went on. Opposition re-awakened : The Liberals tried to paralyse Fascism from within ; the Socialists meditated revenge ; the *Popolari* played off Fascists and Socialists. Action on a broader front, on the constitution itself, must be taken.

The " statutory " process began with the passage of the Election Law of 1923. This constituted the first and fundamental change in the Italian Constitution. For that Constitution, though it did not contain the law relating to elections, did depend on the principle that Government was rightfully exercised only by a majority which issued from elections in which all votes were equal, and honestly obtained. The Law of 1923 provided that the political parties which obtained the largest number of votes

in the whole country—if at least 25 per cent of the total votes cast—should receive two-thirds of all the seats in the Chamber of Deputies. The intention was to abolish the régime of coalition Governments, the curse of Italy. The parties of the Right voted for the Government; they were not discontent since they (for example, Salandra and his Conservatives) were becoming more and more tarred with the Fascist brush. The Fascists thus obtained what they wanted *legally*. But Mussolini had told the Chamber on July 15th that its fate depended on its behaviour. He declared that he would not go outside the Constitution, not even outside its spirit. Nevertheless, he explained that while to-day there was still time for Parliament and the country (that is, Fascists) to be reconciled, to-morrow would be too late, " you can sense it in the air, you can sense it in your minds." On February 1st, 1924, Mussolini declared, " whoever touches the Militia will get lead ! " The ensuing election, of April 6th, 1924, was perfectly managed from the Fascist standpoint. The true Fascist candidates were carefully selected, men of the right wing parties were included in the Fascist list, local candidates from among the old bosses were chosen in the South. Three hundred and seventy-five candidates were run; ample funds were provided by the Federation of Joint Stock Companies. All of Mussolini's speeches were incitements to his faithful to be ready to defend the revolution. There was widespread intimidation, bribery, interference with opposition meetings, communications, beatings, threats; on election day the Militia was mobilised in the rural areas, and the secrecy of the vote was the subject of many very good jokes. The Fascists received nearly five million votes (268 seats), liberal and democratic friends obtained 107 seats, Socialists one million votes (62 seats), the *Popolari* 650,000 (40 seats) and Opposition Liberals about 600,000 (58 seats). Henceforth all the laws and the decree laws needed by the Fascists to transform the constitution into a dictatorship were obtainable by perfectly " constitutional " means. For the Italian Constitution of 1848 was not, like the American Constitution, under the protection of the Law Courts, and there was no " rigid " clause in the constitution subjecting its amendment to more difficult rules than the making of an ordinary law. Hence, an ordinary majority of the Chamber put the Constitution entirely in Fascist

hands. Not that anything said or done by Mussolini would have been an obstacle to "the rights of revolution" which he was always invoking. But power always seeks authority, even if, for other purposes, the forms of it are despised and held up to public ridicule.

The violence of the election and the desperation of the opposition now led to the tragedy of Matteotti. This capable and noble Socialist arraigned the Government on May 30th, 1924. On June 7th, Mussolini replied. He claimed that between February 15th and April 22nd, 18 Fascists had been killed and 147 wounded. He offered the Socialists co-operation, or, if they tried insurrection, "in 24 hours or 24 minutes all will be over!" Three days later Matteotti was "missing." He had been murdered. The highest figures in the Fascist ranks, De Bono and the Ministry of the Interior were implicated. The evidence does not exculpate Mussolini. The "moral question" was raised. The country seethed. Mussolini was in despair, the opposition parties left the Parliament, retreated to the Aventine, as the phrase goes, the most stupid action imaginable. Even Salandra, Orlando, and Giolitti protested, and seceded. After that Mussolini attacked.

Here we are concerned only with the means of crushing existing or potential opposition. Statistics do not matter much. What does matter is the cleverness with which the iron bars had been arranged, and the final fact that an army, the Militia, of selected Fascists, was in being, sworn to restore "public order," and generally pledged to defend Fascism. In other words, it was not, as in other countries, that severe laws might be given a mild application. All these laws and administrative regulations repressing opposition were made in deadly earnest and applied without compunction. Everybody knew that, and the knowledge reduced the number of occasions when the penal provisions had to be put into operation.

The Press. Fascist legislation has suitably elaborated the second part of the constitutional guarantee contained in Art. 28 of the Statuto, "the Press is free, but a law represses the abuse thereof." This was accompanied by a Decree Law of July 15th, 1924, embodied in the Laws of December 31st, 1925, and

regulations of March 4th, 1925. The effect of the older decrees and the new ones is as follows. No printing establishment can be opened without permission of the police authorities. (Fine, up to 5,000 lire, or 6 months imprisonment.) No newspaper or periodical may be founded without previous declaration, in detail, to the Minister of the Interior. All periodicals must have a legally responsible editor—under Fascism not a mere catspaw or Deputy or Senator immune from prosecution—who can only be appointed with the approval of the Public Prosecutor of the Province, who must also be supplied with full information regarding the periodical. Every year a written and signed declaration must be handed to him, naming the proprietor of the periodical. The equipment, or a special deposit, stand as guarantees for civil responsibilities and fines, and law costs involved in criminal proceedings. The Prefects, who are the watch-dogs of the régime in their Provinces, may sequester a paper or periodical if it, " by false or misleading news complicates the diplomatic action of the Government in its relation with foreign countries, or depreciates the national credit at home or abroad, or unjustly alarms the populace, or in any way disturbs the public peace ; if a newspaper excites to crime or class hatred or disobedience of the laws and orders of public authorities (and a legal decision has held that members of the Fascist Militia are public authorities),[1] or disturbs the discipline of employees in a public service, or favours the interests of foreign states, associations or individuals to the detriment of Italian interests, or disparages the Fatherland, the King, the Royal Family, the Pope, the religion, institutions, and powers of the State and of friendly powers." The Code of Public Security (Nov. 6th, 1926)[2] further penalises the exhibition to the public and the import from abroad of printed material contrary to the national order of the State, or injurious to the national dignity and prestige of Governmental authorities.

There is no mistake about the full-comprehensiveness of these prohibitions and their effectiveness is guaranteed by the omnipresence of the agents of the Fascist Party, and the atmosphere, education, and composition of the Law Courts. For the Courts

[1] Cf. Piromallo, *Codice per l'Udienza penale*, Art. 341, 1934.
[2] Cf. *Testo unico di Pubblica Sicurezza*, Art. 112.

are no longer regarded as the safeguard of the individual against the Executive. The theory of the separation of powers is decisively rejected by all the subservient professors of law, and they train the judges.

Sedition and Insults. It must be remembered, further, that the Penal Code is really, if not formally, part of the Constitution. It was reformed between December 1925, and October 1930: its genius being Professor Alfredo Rocco. A Nationalist, and a repressive cynic, Rocco made the Code to fit the needs. We must not forget Art. 272 which threatens heavy punishment for "propaganda for the violent establishment of a dictatorship of one social class over others, or for the violent suppression of a social class, or, in whatever way, for the violent subversion of the economic or social order constituted in the State, or propaganda for the destruction of all political and judicial order, society . . . or propaganda for destroying or depressing the national sentiment, or the defence of such actions." Even communication *in private to one other person* is sufficient to invoke a sentence. The Royal Family and its ancestors and offspring, and the Chief of the Government, must not be offended in their honour or prestige. (One to five years imprisonment.) Whoever publicly vilifies the Crown, the Government, the Grand Council of Fascism, Parliament, the Armed Forces or the Judiciary, is punishable by from one to seven years imprisonment.[1] For vilifying the Italian nation the punishment is from one to three years; for vilifying the national flag or other emblem of the State (the Fascist emblem is included in the emblem of the State) one to three years. The "publication and diffusion of false, exaggerated or tendentious news *apt to* disturb the public order," if it does not constitute a proven crime, is punished with three months arrest and a 3,000 lire fine. No one may distribute or in any way put in circulation (or put placards or lighting devices or acoustic apparatus in a public place or open to the public) writings or drawings without having obtained permission. Although of a slightly different nature, we may nevertheless include here the articles on insults to State servants, offences to the honour and prestige of officers

[1] Arts. 278 and 297, Penal Code.

and officials, a political, administrative or judicial body or a representative thereof, orally or in telegraphic or telephonic communications, or by writing or drawing. How widely open are the arms of the law can be seen from cases in which sentence was passed on a person who " with manifest contempt " uttered the phrase, " Oh, so you're the *authority*, are you ? " to a Secretary of the local Fascio who had intervened to calm a quarrel ; and for an insult (not specified) to a Fascist Militiaman inspecting, under orders, a brothel ; and on a Fascist, " one of the early squadristi," who asked the Station Master to come outside the office and settle the dispute !

It must be remembered that, besides what we in England would recognise as officers and officials in the terms of these articles, the Italian law extends their application to " any person who exercises permanently or temporarily, gratuitously or with pay, voluntarily or obligatorily, a public function, legislative, administrative, or judicial." This has definitely been applied to the Militia, the Fascist Federal Secretaries, to Commissioners sent by the Prefect to register the Fascist Avanguardisti, the administrator of the Provincial office of Fascist Trade Unions, and the President of the Municipal Committee of the Balilla.[1] Their judgements and *obiter dicta* entitle us to believe that the whole Fascist apparatus, especially when actually engaged on State or Fascist Party business, is protected from criticism, especially in the traditional Italian form of sardonic remarks or cynical mockery.

In outlining the limits to opposition in the Press, we have deviated a little into the field of general manifestations against the authorities. We must return for a moment to the Press proper. Two more things should be observed. As a consequence of the cumulative powers of the police and the law courts, dealt with above, it is within the power of the Prefect of any Province to enforce a previous censorship on the printing of any book or article. This local censorship is operative in cities where the last few independent and ingenious writers reside. It may be asked how does the Prefect *know* that such publications are contemplated. The answer is that, in the case of a periodical, the editor

[1] *Vide* reference to Piromallo, above.

will for his safety's sake let him know. In the case of books the police have other means of learning: the tapping of the telephones, and opening of correspondence. The Party is always on the watch, and has made it the safest procedure for authors to submit their writings to the local office for a viaticum.

Journalism. Also, the profession of journalism has been fully subjected to Government control. No one may practice journalism unless he is a member of the Professional Roll of Journalists (Decree, February 20th, Art. 1). Qualifications for admission to the Roll are proof of good moral and political standing, satisfactory to the Roll officials and the Prefect (Arts. 5 and 6) and (Decree, February 20th, 1928, Art. 16), possession of a secondary school diploma or the equivalent. Now both the "political standing" and the school qualification mean (for the future) satisfactory passage through the Young Fascist organisations and indoctrination with the Fascist theory of the State. The Prefect no doubt acts on the certificate of good conduct required for all public professions given by the Podestà of the municipality, and he is in a position to give very detailed information about the citizens of his area. Further, the Roll is kept by the National Fascist Syndicate of Journalists, which falls under the general scheme of Fascist associations. This is under the final authority of the Ministry of Corporations, and the immediate supervision of its own officials, who are trusted Fascists, and approved by the Ministry, the legally recognised and exclusive representative association of the Profession. Those who belong to it get the preference in available work, free passes on the railways, privileges regarding the theatres, and other facilities for their work. Those who do not belong to it get no work at all.

Press, Radio and Cinema. The positive manipulation of the Press, the Radio and the Cinema, falls rather under the topic of the manufacture of obedience than the suppression of the opposition, but it is most conveniently treated here. Mussolini, the former journalist, needed no teaching that the continuance of his régime would depend upon the organisation of an incessant outpour of facts and opinions suitably expressed and timed. He realised, also, the importance of affecting foreign

opinion favourably. A propaganda bureau was established for the Party, and Mussolini was himself directly served by a persona bureau, afterwards converted into a division of the Ministry of the Interior of which he is chief. After the opposition Press was swept away by the means described, and others which will become patent as we proceed, the weaker independent journals were badgered into accepting the dictation of the local authorities and the central propaganda bureaus, while the more important were bought out by friends of Mussolini after their editors' lives had been " made impossible " by violence, suspensions and confiscations. Thus, at present, the faithful Fascists who have been put in control of the newspapers co-operate with those in the propaganda headquarters. To read the list of editors in Italy is to read a list of the Nationalists, Conservatives, semi-liberals, and dictatorial syndicalists who deserved well of the régime. Following the example of Nazi Germany, which had established a Ministry of Enlightenment and Propaganda, the régime established, in September 1934, a special under-Secretaryship for Press and Propaganda, with Signor Mussolini's son-in-law, Galleazzo Ciano, in charge.[1] This merely makes the regimentation of the Press somewhat more stringent than heretofore. The truth is, that though Fascists absolutely control all the newspapers, it is dangerous to leave them without command from above. For, as we have already seen, no one knows exactly what Fascism is, and the various leaders, having arrived in the Party from all points of the compass, might easily diverge in their presentation of the news and opinion, and discomfit, or even discredit the Government. The Department sees, at least, that the main political and economic material receives uniform treatment in terms of information, the proportion of space, the position in the paper, and the size of the headlines. There are some differences interesting to a foreigner, but insignificant to Italians. Nothing else is known in Italy but what the Government chooses to tell, in the way that the Government chooses to tell it. All over the country, every day, there is identical " enlightenment."

Two years ago there was disclosed, and then published by *Guistizia e Libertà,*[2] some of the instructions sent out by the

[1] Cf. article in *Corriere della Sera*, September 11th, 1934.

[2] The organisation of the anti-Fascist exiles in Paris, *Bollettino Notizie*, No. 1.

Bureau to the newspapers. Among them were these two choice pieces: "Make sympathetic comment on the rebirth of the military spirit in Germany. It would be expedient however not to publish these comments under neuropathetic or alarmist headlines." And again, "Publish the news about the increase of unemployment in England in striking style." For many months in 1933–34, the whole Press was insulting France, and then raking over the Stavisky scandal. Since August 1934, attention has wandered to Germany, and from time to time, the newspapers are let loose on the subject of racialism. But France, since the last few months, though still the same abominable democracy that she was previously, has been receiving a succession of daily bouquets.

The Department of Propaganda supervises both the Radio[1] and the Cinema. Broadcasting in Italy is administered by a private company. Naturally the Government has whatever time it wants for propaganda, especially in the daily "Chronicle of the Régime," and there are no opposition parties to claim an equitable share of the time. Special attention is paid to the countryside through the organisation known as the Ente Radio Rurale, which is financed by the State. It has arranged for the manufacture of cheap radio sets, and their sale on the instalment plan to schools, the local authorities, and local Fascist Groups. It is estimated that some 50,000 sets have been brought within this scheme. Special attention is paid to children's programmes, the nature of which, from the political standpoint, falls within the description given in the Chapter on the Youth Organisations.

The film industry is controlled from the beginning of a production to its exhibition. The investment of money in the film industry is regulated by the Corporation of Public Spectacles and the Ministry of Corporations. Finally, in 1924 the Government promoted the establishment of a semi-autonomous film company known as L.U.C.E., whose principal business is to provide news-reels (which it is obligatory to show) and "social and national propaganda"[2] films. These, it is needless to say, are unrestrained glorifications of Mussolini and all his works. The

[1] See *Il Popolo d'Italia*, January 27th, 1935.

[2] "(*Istituto Nazionale*) *L'Unione Cinematografica Educativa.*" Cf. Decrees, November 5th, 1925; December 24th, 1925.

Institute has promoted the production of two films, *Camicia Nera* (Black Shirt), and *Vecchia Guardia*, stories of the Fascist Revolution. They proved that Mussolini was right to " chase away all the bad Italians," as the school-books say.

Apart from the Press, potential opposition in the modern state comes from individual or collective verbal propaganda, which includes individual discussion, canvassing, the right of association and the right of meeting. These are suitably stultified by Fascist law and practice. We have already observed the rigorous nature of the Penal Code regarding these matters. The Law on Associations of November 26th, 1925, pretended to deal only with Freemasonry (or more generically " secret societies "). It dealt, however, with " parties, groups, and political organisations in general, unless merely temporary." The powers of dissolution given to the Prefects were wide enough to secure the dissolution of all associations opposed to Fascism because " prosecuting in any way whatever an activity contrary to the national order of the State." The provisions of the Defence of the State Act of November 1926,[1] forbid the reconstruction of associations, organisations or parties dissolved by the Government, membership of such bodies, or propagation of their doctrines, programmes and mode of action.[2] It establishes the punishment of imprisonment, loss of citizenship and confiscation of the property of citizens, who being *abroad*, " diffuse and communicate in any form, rumours or false news, exaggerated or tendentious on the internal conditions of the State, in such wise as to lower the credit or prestige of the State abroad, or carry on any activity which will be noxious to national interests."

The Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State.

The Act establishes the Special Tribunal for the Defence of the State to deal with the crimes against the personality of the State (some articles we have reproduced), and the

[1] *Provvedimenti per la difesa dello Stato*, No. 2008 ; and amendments and additions ; December 12th, 1926, No. 2062 ; March 13th, 1927, No. 313 ; March 1st, 1928, No. 380 ; September 27th, 1928, No. 2209 ; June 4th, 1931, No. 674.

[2] Yet a little later the punishment was not to apply to doctrines, etc., " traditionally considered compatible with the practical and economic constitution of Italy," even if propagated by dissolved associations. Without this amendment too zealous readers of Mussolini's speeches and writings before October 1922, might have found themselves in Court.

offences mentioned above, and attempts on the life of the King or the Chief of the Government. Let us for a moment return to the Penal Code. Heavy punishment is threatened for those promoting, constituting, organising or directing associations directed towards violently establishing a class dictatorship or violently suppressing any social class, or, in any way, violently subverting the economic and social institutions of the State. So too with Anarchist associations. So also for associations to suppress or depress the national sentiment. All these matters are dealt with by the Special Tribunal, and, what is more, retroactively. This Court is constituted to act sharply. Immediate arrest follows denunciation ; there is no bail ; no authority exists to terminate the period of custody before the trial. A preliminary examination is made by a magistrate appointed, dismissible and instructed by the Ministry for War, that is the highest military authority of the area in which the Tribunal sits. The magistrates are not necessarily trained in the law. The presidents and vice-presidents are appointed by the Chief of the Government from high officers of the armed forces and the Militia. (I had the honour of being introduced to the present President in Rome, and could study him for a few minutes. He looked every inch a soldier.) The judges must be officers in the Militia, and, if they are superior officers in the Army, Navy, or Air Force, need no law degree.[1]

There are not the usual guarantees which other countries most carefully provide to secure the independence and impartiality of the judges in relation to the political authority, and the spirit of right judgement. The judges of the Court are sworn to obey Mussolini, especially as Militiamen. It must be remembered that Italian legal training is now regarded not merely as the assimilation of law, but as an education in the principles of " corporative justice." Furthermore, the guarantee of justice resides in procedure for the defence. Here the Court is defective also, for the accused may not have legal assistance until the preliminary examination is over ; but that is the stage when, perhaps, it is the more wanted, as the magistracy is the more anxious to secure a conviction. Nor is the accused entirely free to choose his counsel, since the President of the Court can reject

[1] Decree, March 13th, 1927, No. 313, Art. 1.

his choice and appoint one from among the panel (Fascists, naturally) of the Court. Nor can counsel have documents until eight days before the trial, and even this term may be reduced ; nor are witnesses for the defence allowed to appear. For poor defendants the legal fees are too high ; lawyers would take the severest risks if they really pressed their clients' cases, as an English defending counsel normally does. Only members of the Party and the Press may enter the Court on the rare occasions when it is " public " ; the cases are not reported with any detail in the Press. Finally, neither in this Court nor in the procedure of admonition and confinement mentioned earlier, is there any jury.

Now certain computations[1] show that between February 1927 and April 1932 the Court sentenced 7 persons to death, and the sentences were carried out ; 257 persons were sentenced to 10 or more years' imprisonment ; and 1,360 were sentenced to sentences below 10 years ; 584 were acquitted. It is also calculated that some 12,000 were kept in custody for some time, and then found to be innocent.

Hence, it is well enough known that the State will stand no nonsense from its adversaries, even if their hostility is not a settled philosophy supported by the resolution to overthrow the régime or even subject it to steady criticism. A whisper *may* lead to five years' imprisonment. A simple spontaneous expression of doubt may yield ruin by a crushing fine. The cases which are known are swollen by rumours of those about which there is no accurate information, and the Fascist officials by suitable hints, grimaces and gesticulations suggest untold revenge.

Nor is that all. Police measures which before Fascism were applicable to criminals guilty of crime against persons and property, were in Article 166 of the Public Safety Act of November 25th, 1926, elaborated and extended to political offenders. This article enumerates " socially dangerous " persons, and among them are " those dangerous to the national order of the State." It is enough if " public opinion " reports the " danger." The first stage of public action is a police reprimand, complete with search and supervision. The second stage is

[1] *Ginstizia e Libertà*. Cf. also *Italy To-day*, July–August 1931 (Hendersons, Charing Cross Road).

"admonition"—or as we say being "bound over"—for two years during which the person must "live honourably, respect the laws, give no cause for suspicion and not leave his permanent residence without due notice to the local police . . . nor associate with any convicted or suspected person, retire later at night or go out earlier in the day than at fixed hours, nor carry arms, frequent restaurants, public-houses or brothels, or take part in public meetings." The third and final step of police intervention is deportation from one's home town to some other part of Italy, usually the Islands, and complete or partial confinement there from one to five years. This is decreed by a Commission presided over by the Prefect of the Province, and composed of the Public Prosecutor, the Chief of the *carabinieri* (national police), and a high official of the Militia. There is an appeal to the Minister of the Interior. The first two stages cause terrible annoyance and inconvenience : it needs little effort to imagine the effect on one's business or profession and friends, the difficulties of the children at school, and so on.

The Law on Public Security[1] regulates the right of meeting. Three days previous notice must be given to the local police. A meeting, although private in the form of invitations to it, *is public* if the place announced, the number of persons invited, and the object of the meeting exclude its private character. Meetings may be prohibited with or without grounds. They may be dissolved for reasons of public order, or for manifestations which are seditious or injurious to the dignity and prestige of the authorities. Even for religious manifestations outside places of worship previous permission is required. I have never heard of a *political* meeting in Italy in recent years, except those in the direct control of, and convened by, Fascist authorities. To make quite certain about all other meetings, the Government passed a law (August 1926 and February 1927) subjecting public manifestations of science, "intellectuality," charity, sports, and commemorations and celebrations, to previous approval of the Prefect (and the Prime Minister, when they were of national dimensions). No authorisation can be given for anything contradictory to the "national conscience." If by any chance you should get excited at a public meeting or in any place exposed to

[1] Part II., paragraphs 5, 6, 7 and 8.

the public, severe punishment might follow for " seditious cries and gesticulations."

The most elementary conditions of the diffusion of opinions are the ability of the individual to circulate wherever he lives without restraint or fear, immunity from arbitrary domiciliary search, and secrecy of the post. The Law on Public Security requires that no hotel or boarding-house can give lodging unless one is equipped with an identity card or other means of identity issued by a government official—the police. The hotel and boarding-house management must notify the police daily of arrivals and departures of guests. Judicial and local administrative authorities may order search without justification whatever. (Compare this plain clearance of safeguards with the storm of protest against the English Sedition Bill of 1934, the proposals of which were infinitely milder than this, and even then subject to judicial safeguards and public defence.) Then, under the Law for the Defence of the State, a decree subjects all correspondence sent or received by political suspects to censorship, and permits the Government to commandeer or destroy it. This was the first indubitable evidence of the Dictatorship I met with in Italy, within a few minutes of my arrival. Not that *I* was suspect, but I had had my letters forwarded from England and France to someone who was.

Finally, by the effect of the Law on the Syndical Associations of 1926, and the Law on Secret Associations, no economic association can exist except under Fascist recognition and control, and all other associations and institutions must give full particulars about themselves, their objects and their members, to the Prefect, who can dissolve them for any omissions or false or incomplete declarations. Who will dare to say they intend to criticise Mussolini and the Fascist Party? All civil and military employees of the State, the local authorities and the institutions under their control, are forbidden membership of any secret societies. Hence opposition is completely suppressed. Every channel which it usually takes is stopped up.

Now every State has the right to safeguard itself. But on what terms? English law gives a clue to the answer. England has its Law of Seditious Libel, and severe penalties for offences under it, and it is drawn with a width that might be a severe restriction of

liberty of criticism. It might be—if the procedure and temper were as in Italy. The safeguard in England is the safeguard of independent judges trained in law and justice, hostile, if to anybody, to the Executive, the ample right to defence and the production of witnesses, and the power of the jury of twelve ordinary men and women to judge of fact and intention.

Hence the Fascist State has made away with all but clandestine criticism. That is, however, only the negative aspect of a dictatorship, and it will not yield the dictator what he most wants, namely positive acceptance and obedience. Obedience is not merely not thinking or saying certain things, it is positively saying and doing certain others. The dictator may stifle the criticism which appears in papers and books, and which passes by word of mouth from one citizen to another, but he *cannot* abolish that silent but steady growth of criticism which the experience of his measures writes in the spontaneous reactions of the citizens. He must put something positive in the place of what he has annihilated if he wants to achieve his favourite positive objects. But the first step is accomplished by destruction. We shall show later how the dictatorship rushes into the spiritual vacuum which it has tried to create.

The laws and regulations for the suppression of opposition are put into force by the administrative authorities, the police, and the Fascist Militia. The administrative authorities include the 7,000 Podestà, that is the mayors of the municipalities, appointed, since 1925, by the central authority; they include the 93 Prefects, who are the chief local political governors of the Provinces into which Italy is divided, and the various nominated councils working with the Prefect. Then there are the Police. These consist of two forces, the *carabinieri*, a State organisation ramifying throughout Italy, and the municipal police forces, under the control of Podestà and Prefect. It is difficult to find the total number of these. As a rough calculation they amount to well over 80,000, a number considerably in excess of the 63,000 police of all kinds in England.[1] That is not all, however. There is a secret police organisation, apart from the ordinary plain-clothes detective

[1] I calculate that the expenses on "Public Security" and the *carabinieri* are only slightly less than in 1927–28, when Mussolini (May 26th, 1927) said there were about 80,000. Pay has, since then, been very considerably cut.

force, called the O.V.R.A., which apparently means the *Opera Volontaria Repressione* (*or Reazione*) *Antifascista*, the "voluntary organisation for the repression of anti-Fascism." Nobody knows much about its organisation, pay, or members. But its presence and its spying and denouncing activities are everywhere suspected. A professor might suddenly find himself delated by a student, for example. Besides all this the Fascist Militia of some 450,000, or one in every four of the Fascist Party,[1] is especially relied upon to inform the Government of politically improper talk and behaviour.

Intimidation and Fear. More important than numbers, though numbers give the Duce the eyes and ears that he wants, is the will to put down opposition. It is so uncompromising and persistent, and liable to be so punitive when it is disregarded, that even the bravest men surrender. Even if prepared to sacrifice their own livelihood and life, they cannot risk involving their families or friends in ruin. Thus the basis of the system is Fear: fear of the authorities; fear of any Italian one does not intimately know; fear of one's friends; fear even of members of one's own family who may get one into trouble unintentionally. Not that the Government regularly deals out the penalties. That is not necessary. It made enough examples, up to about 1931,[2] and makes occasional ones now,[3] sufficient to cow people into silence. Into this spiritual vacuum the Government then proceeds to pour the motives for obedience to its own positive commands.

[1] Cf. Chapter XII. below. Of these 20,000 officers and men are in permanent service (see *Corriere della Sera*, February 1st, 1935, twelfth anniversary of the Militia), apart from the special Militia of the Railways, Ports, Frontiers, Roads and Forests numbering 1,700 officers and 10,000 men. All these must be counted as Police. Article 219 ff. in the Code of Criminal Procedure gives police powers to all these.

[2] Cf. Tiltman, *The Terror in Europe*, pp. 193 ff.

[3] Before the war crimes "against public order" coming before the Courts numbered about 1,000 or less annually; between 1922 and 1927 they rose to over 2,200 per year then declined. Comparing the same years in "violence, resistance, and outrage to public authorities" we find 16,000 before the war and then up to 24,000 in 1926 and down to 20,000 now. It must be remembered that all these crimes are now crimes against "Fascist" public order and "Fascist" public authorities.

Chapter IX

INSTITUTIONS

It is important to begin with the words of the present Statute of the Party : " The National Fascist Party is a civil Militia, at the orders of the *Duce*, at the service of the Fascist State." Now, this does not say " at the orders of Mussolini " ; but at the present moment Mussolini is meant, since he was the first to acquire the title of Duce (a quite spontaneous expression of loyalty), a position confirmed by the refusal to accept his resignation in 1921, and more recent expressions of loyalty in the Preamble to the Party Statutes. But the importance of the phrase lies especially in its impersonality, since on Mussolini's departure from office the Party, according to the letter of the Statute, automatically saves the next Duce. This central position is extremely important ; and to make the second part of the article of weight, that is really to link up the Duce with " the service of the State," he is also made the central integrating factor in institutions of the State as distinct from the Party. But it is worth observing that the Party is to be loyal not to *any* State but only to the *Fascist* State.

Mussolini the Centre of the System. The Duce then is in the centre. He is the hub of two concentric and co-operating cycles of activity : the Party institutions on the one hand, and such organs as the Cabinet, Parliament, the Corporations, and that strange institution, the Grand Council of Fascism, on the other. Of course, superficially, this is very little different from the position of a British Prime Minister, for he too is head of a Party, and also head of the Cabinet, the Leader of the House of Commons, and, in proportion to his strength in the country and to his own character, a man of mighty power. The differences, in reality, are immense. Whereas a British Prime Minister is by all the most artfully contrived arrangements of the constitution

subjected to unremitting criticism, the penalty for unsatisfying answers to which is ejection from office, the Fascist system is precisely the opposite, in that it contrives just as artfully, though more brutally, that no one shall be allowed any independent criticism, and that even should such occur, the Leader and his company will keep office in spite of it, perhaps with an extra dash of sympathy because, forsooth, the system has been subjected to " irresponsible " attacks.

Let us consider this system in a little more detail. The reaction of the country to the murder of Matteotti confirmed Mussolini in the faith that the dictatorship must be absolute, and this implied, beyond determination and violence, a radical alteration in the formal constitution of the powers of the State. In August 1924 the Grand Council of Fascism set up a Constitutional Commission of parliamentarians and experts to examine and report on Constitutional problems. In January 1925 the Commission was made a State Commission and its number was changed to 18.[1] The " Solons," as they were called, concerned themselves with two problems only, the first, the relationship between the Executive and the Legislature and the second, the Corporate State. Their report led directly up to the strengthening of the power and independence of the Prime Minister, and the establishment of the power of the executive to make decrees with the force of law. The former we shall deal with now ; the latter, in relation to the present constitution and power of Parliament.

A Strong and Independent Executive. With regard to the problem of the Executive and Parliament, it must be remembered that among the grounds for the establishment of the Commission itself was this : " in consideration of the profound political, moral, and economic transformation of the Nation, as the result of the victorious War "—and this obviously meant there was to be none of the old Giolittian nonsense. Naturally, the parliamentary system was denounced as constituting nothing less than an usurpation of the powers of government by a body neither historically entitled to it, nor capable of

[1] Cf. *Relazioni e Proposte della Commissione per lo Studio delle riforme Costituzionali*, edn., Le Monnier, Florence, 1932.

exercising it for " the higher ends of the State." The Commission argued that the power of the Crown to govern had been encroached upon by Parliament quite disproportionately to the actual services rendered by it. It reasserted the principle of the separation of powers, not to safeguard the rights of the legislative body, but to subtract from it the right of making, unmaking, and controlling the Council of Ministers.[1] The Council, it argued, ought to be above and beyond the " transient and contingent needs of the prevailing political parties." The Executive must be " durable, careful and coherent " ; the State must be " continuous and ready in its action " ; and, both for international and internal affairs, complex and intricate, and everchanging in the extreme, the government must be strong, free, independent, and permanent. " Of the powers among which the acts and the explicit sovereignty of the State were distributed, the chief importance must now as always be attributed to the Executive." Action gives coherence to the State, and the Executive is the active element in the State. " The exercise of the Executive power can only take place under the direction of a limited number of persons who form an organic unit, since its action must be ready, sure, unanimous, fully conscious and responsible." Even the initiative in law-making is, in practice, taken by the Executive. Hence, the Executive power is in no sense to be regarded as an emanation of Parliament, but as the Crown, and, through the Crown and responsible to the Crown alone, the Government freely appointed by the Crown.

The Prime Minister. The Chief of the Government (*Capo del Governo*), or Prime Minister, is an official established by a Law of December 24th, 1925.[2] He is appointed by the King and dismissible by him. The Prime Minister proposes to the King the Ministers to form his Council ; they are responsible to the King and to the Prime Minister ; the latter has the right to take over any and as many of the other ministries as and when he thinks fit. He has no responsibility to Parliament, but, according to this law, only to the King, " for the general political direction of

[1] " Cabinet " is the English equivalent of " Council of Ministers."

[2] Attribuzioni e prerogative del Capo del Governo, Primo Ministro Segretario di Stato ; December 24th, 1925, No. 2263.

the Government." This follows the letter of the old Constitution as to responsibility to the Crown, and the "Solons," indeed, asserted that they were returning to the *Statuto*, Art. 5, which said, "The Executive Power belongs to the King alone," and Art. 65, which said: "The King nominates and dismisses *his* Ministers." Under the pre-Fascist government, responsibility to the King[1] was, as in England, interpreted as responsibility to Parliament in the first place, and then, through Parliament, to the political parties, and finally to the country at large.

If any responsibility of the Duce is at all admitted in the secret hearts of the Fascists, then it must be responsibility to the Party, and no other party exists to represent the public. The Fascist Party is the sole trustee of the people; and, in fact, if the Duce were not satisfactory, it would be the leading members of the Party who would bring responsibility home to him, although, out of fear for their own skins if anything should be seriously awry, they might not hurry to raise the matter. In the first place then, the responsibility is simply the conscience of the Duce, with a distant sense of trusteeship to the Party and the people in the background. Whoever is Duce has the formal power of making and unmaking the political careers of a score of men who are ambitious to hold the highest positions in the State. How far he can make use of this power and how far he wants to, depends upon the character of the Duce.

The law is drawn so that there is no doubt about the subordinate status of the Ministers to the Prime Minister: "he directs and co-ordinates the work of the Ministers, decides any differences which may arise among them, convenes the Cabinet and presides over it." The conventional primacy secured to Prime Ministers in democratic régimes by their leadership of a majority party or parties, is here translated into formal law, and enhanced especially by the clause that he alone is responsible for the *general policy*. In Italy this situation had already been approached (but only in law, not in practice), by the royal decree of November 1901, on the Council of Ministers. As Signor Alfredo Rocco said in his introduction of the law in the Chamber of Deputies: "the Prime Minister is the master (*Capo*) of the Ministers, not merely *primus inter pares*."

[1] The Statuto (Art. 6) merely said, "Ministries are responsible."

Mussolini's sense of personal responsibility is extremely strong, and the intention to give the country an example of what great men can do, of the universal value of authority and energy, causes Mussolini to regard his colleagues as colleagues for a day, if it is possible to use the word " colleague " in this sense. As I have heard it put, he intends that they shall realise, and that all the country shall realise, that they are but dust and ashes, and that the flame of life issues from, and is extinguished by, him. The friends of Ministers derive a not entirely pure pleasure from fiendish speculations about how soon the Duce's Secretary, with a letter of resignation ready for signature, will announce himself. As Rochefoucauld said, " There is something about the misfortunes of our friends which does not entirely displease us."

Changing the Guard. In May 1927, Mussolini told the Chamber: " The Government is compact, solid, in harmony. You must consider that in the Fascist Government all the Ministers and all the Under-Secretaries are soldiers : they go where their chief tells them, and they stay if I tell them to stay. There is nothing now to remind us of the old *ménage* of the days gone by ! We have the firm military discipline of the Fascist régime ! " Ministers are frequently reshuffled as part of the regular theory of government, known as " changing the guard," which, in less consolatory language, means giving all the aspirants for office in the country a hope, if not an opportunity, of promotion, and exciting anxiety in those who already have jobs. He is specially grateful to those who go without the air of slamming the door !

This is essential in a dictatorial régime, which is not subject to the refreshing, dynamic, influences of free criticism in the manner of a parliamentary system.[1] The Ministers are not the product of a free parliamentary competition lasting, as it sometimes does, some twenty years before a man arrives at even minor office. They cannot be selected for qualities of government, that is, of the management of men by persuading them

[1] Thus in thirteen years there have been six Ministers in the Colonial Ministry, four in the Ministry of Justice, six in the Ministry of Finance, five in the Ministry of War, five in the Ministry of the Marine, two in the Air Ministry, four in Agriculture, seven in Education, five in Public Works, six in the Ministry of Communications.

that a course which the politician proposes is the one for which they ought to be willing to sacrifice their goods, their time, and their liberty. Less and less is this possible, or needed, on Mussolini's theory, as the days of the old system recede. Ministers and Under-Secretaries of State have emerged first from the loyalties of the March on Rome, for example De Bono, Balbo, Grandi, Bottai, De Stefani, Bianchi, Rossoni, Giurati, and Arpinati; from the need to reward the Nationalist Party which merged itself in the Fascist Party, for example Federzoni, Rocco, Ercole; and also from the need for technical experts, such as Mosconi and Jung (finance), Acerbo (agriculture), Gentile (education), and Asquini and Biagi (corporations).

The conditions of success in the Fascist State have demanded that all, without exception, should fall under the very stringent control of the Duce. Some, like Rossoni, Balbo, or Grandi, have in their time disputed the allegiance of the rank and file with the Duce himself; others needed watching, so that their former loyalties should not be obstacles to the Duce's present policy; while the technical, that is to say the *academic*, men, expert and even wise though they may be, need to be brought within the general frame of *political* values, as distinct from the isolated values of their own particular field of study. Thus, the Ministers form a Council, but not a Cabinet in the British sense that they emerge from the maelstrom of politics in which character is more important than technique, or that they have a collective responsibility, or that they have to face Parliament successfully as a condition of their future career, or that they bear weight in the Cabinet not only by reason of their intellectual qualities, but as a consequence of their individual popularity.

On January 24th, 1935, all the existing Ministers and all the Under-Secretaries save two, sixteen people in all, "resigned," to make way for the new guard. *Il Popolo d'Italia* commented, "This time, too, the changing of the guard took place with silent regularity, as is the constant rule in the régime." The *Corriere della Sera* observed: "Thus persons change, and yet in substance nothing is changed . . . the order comes from above: the inspiration is given by Mussolini, who personally administers most of the Ministries and controls others with his marvellous spiritual ubiquity." It must not be forgotten that Mussolini

himself has simultaneously held the departments of Foreign Affairs, the Interior, War, Marine, Air, and Corporations.

The anxious question for the future is, who shall take the Duce's place? He looks to the development of a governing class, and has said that a Cabinet might consist of faithful young men of thirty or thereabouts who have graduated from the Youth Organisations. Yet, as indicated later, the lack of real political competition within the only existing Party is not the ideal condition of the training of a governing class. It is a delusion to think, as Mussolini once thought, in terms of the younger Pitt: his career was made in open competition, with strong opponents, not in a process of pandering, conformity, and backstairs intrigues.

The Duce is, then, supreme in relation to the Cabinet.

The Crown. What of the Crown? Its formal situation has undergone no change of importance; but it has suffered an actual diminution of power, and an increase of prestige. It has lost its former power to make and unmake Cabinets, since the formation of a Cabinet no longer depends on the composition of Parliament, and even if it did, that composition is now settled by the Fascist Party. Mussolini keeps the King informed of his intentions; he shows him much personal respect. If the King has lost power, he has gained at least an artificial dignity. Before the Fascists came to power, there were towns which, owing to their political complexion, it was impossible for the King to visit. A strong republican sentiment prevailed in the Republican and Socialist Parties. Mussolini made peace with the Monarchy because he needed the Nationalist Party and the Army. The Penal Code of 1931 stiffened the crime of insulting the Royal Family; and the Law for the Defence of the State of 1926 established the death penalty for attempts on the King's life. To-day, the Royal Family is used as one of the means—among many others—of securing the acclamation of the crowd for Fascist policies and celebrations, and the national integration of loyalties. In Mussolini's words: "The Monarchy is the sacred symbol, glorious, traditional, millenary, of the Nation; we have strengthened the Monarchy and made it more august. Our loyalty is perfect." (October 28th, 1923.)

The policy is to conduct national loyalties to a focal point, the Crown, and, then, when they are gathered there, to appropriate them for the Fascist Party. The Royal Anthem is sung together with *Giovinezza* on all public occasions, and most occasions in Fascist Italy are public. The portraits of the King and Queen are hung in all the schools. The children include them in their daily prayers, between the Pope and the Duce. The State-prescribed text-books tell of their doughty deeds in Italy's history. There are frequent eulogies of the King. On the 11th of November, his birthday is celebrated. "Do you know what the King's name is?" asks the elementary text-book? "Of course I do!" answers little Mariella. "And I also know that he is called 'Vittorio the Victorious,' because the last Great War was fought and won under his high command." "Bravo!" is the response. Family events, such as the birth of a daughter to the Crown Princess, are made the occasion of propaganda as long and intensive as in England. That is a great improvement on the previous situation of the Monarchy in Italy. No doubt prestige has been increased with the formerly indifferent, for it gives them something to chatter about; and the rising generation are being indoctrinated. Yet indoctrination is not the same thing as real interest and belief. As we shall suggest later, it does not follow that the Fascists care as much for the latter as for obedience. In that case the Crown has certainly been made a useful auxiliary of the Fascist Party.

Parliament. The early intentions of Mussolini were not to destroy Parliament, and perhaps not even seriously to restrict its independence of criticism and amendment of the laws. The Fascists wanted a body that would co-operate with the Government, give it the benefit of "responsible" and "technical" criticism, and then declare itself satisfied and happy with the genius of Mussolini. This, however, only shows how little conscious of his real destination Mussolini was in 1922 and 1923. While free elections, a free Press, and free political parties continued to exist and to constitute and encourage Parliament, there could be no restriction of opposition for any length of time; and the chances were that Parliament would even go so far as to claim to unmake the Cabinet. The secession

to the Aventine in 1924 sealed the matter, although the Commission of the "Solons" still spoke in terms of a Parliament which should "prescribe the general limits within which the Government may act, approving its budgets and proposing laws and exercising a check that culminates in votes of confidence."

The real issue in a constitution is, whose is the right to *will*? Parliament had had this power; it still claimed it; the Fascist Party until the beginning of 1925 was not confident enough, perhaps not frightened enough to be confident, to claim it. In 1925, however, it did so, all along the line, and first and foremost with the law relating to the power of the Prime Minister, a law which we shall need to refer to again in so far as it puts limits on the initiative of Parliament.

To weaken Parliament, however, it is essential to attack the roots of its authority, the Electoral Law. The other methods are to exile or imprison all potential critics; or "manage" the elections; or to withdraw power; or abolish Parliament. Of these alternatives, the first three demand constant vigilance, cause a continual uproar, and may not wholly succeed. The wisest way of abolishing a Parliament is to let it stand, but to fill it with your own trusted nominees. In this way one continues to enjoy the confidence of the politically ignorant, who form the majority, and one secures the subservience of the legislature, which can be used as a forum of acclamation, a *claque*.

The issue was raised in 1927 as a consequence of the drafting of the law and regulations relating to the Syndicates and the Corporations. True, the latter were not in existence, and the establishment of a Council of Corporations (a kind of economic parliament) was as yet far off, but there would be elections in the normal way in 1929, and the existing "rump" of 350 Fascist Deputies was at once futile and ready to deliver whatever goods Mussolini wanted. Obviously the new Corporations, or at any rate their precursors, the Confederations of Employers and Employees and other Associations, ought to be linked with the Parliament. Some such plan had been hazily forming itself in the minds of the Fascist constitution-makers.

The Commission of Eighteen had not been unanimous in its

recommendation regarding the reform of the legislature. The overwhelming majority had proposed to divide the Chamber of Deputies into two parts, one half to be elected by the Corporations, the other half to be elected in territorial constituencies in the usual way by universal suffrage. A second proposal was that both Senate and Chamber should be based on the Corporations. A third, by Corrado Gini, the eminent statistician, later to be spewed out of the mouth of "good" Fascists as "unlucky" to the régime, proposed "corporate" representation in the Senate alone—a very moderate reform since the Senate was already a nominated body,[1] and the Chamber would not have been interfered with. The Grand Council of Fascism toyed with Gini's proposals. These amateur efforts were swept out of the public mind by Mussolini's policy, which was a fusion of "economic parliament" with destruction of the authority-giving power of universal suffrage.

"We have created the Corporate State.[2] This Corporate State places us before the institutional problem of Parliament. What will succeed this Chamber? . . . which has egregiously, nobly, and with constancy served the cause of the régime? It is evident, however, that the Chamber of to-morrow cannot resemble that of to-day. To-day, May 26th, we solemnly bury the lie of universal democratic suffrage." (Only six million out of twenty-one million vote; and the only criterion of capacity is "a question of chronology," the age of twenty-one.) "There will be a Chamber, but that Chamber will be elected through the Corporative organisations of the State. Further, does the Nation feel an electoral need? It has forgotten it, and is it really necessary for us to have the attestation of the consent of the people, through a ballot paper? Allow me to think that this is not absolutely necessary."[3]

Early in 1928, the Grand Council formulated proposals which were adopted by the Chamber. So fundamental a reform, by the way, was accepted by the Chamber with practically no discussion. Mussolini had already promised the deputies that, though

[1] Nominated by the Crown from twenty-one categories of notable personages, former Ministers and higher administrative authorities and law courts. Since 1923 the King has obligingly swamped the Senate with Fascists.

[2] How often was this to be repeated in the next few years!

[3] May 26th, 1927.

all of them might not be returned to the Chamber, a place would be found for most of them in other official positions ! In the Senate, forty-six members voted against the measure. Signor Albertini of the *Corriere della Sera* asked, " Would it not be better purely and simply to abolish the Chamber ? " Someone else cried out that the liberty to elect members of Parliament was guaranteed by Article 34 of the Statuto. Much the Government cared for such old-fashioned views !

The Parliaments elected since the Electoral Law of March 1928, have been so composed as to avoid any conflict of will with the Duce. They consist of 400 men put on the List by the Grand Council of Fascism. These are selected from 1,000 nominations presented to the Grand Council, 800 by the legally recognised Confederations of Employers and Employed in each of the great branches of economic life, and 200 by certain other associations. At the Council's discretion it includes in the List others outside these nominations, " men distinguished in the Sciences, Letters, Arts, Arms, or Politics." The single List of 400 is then submitted to the people, which, in fact, has merely to answer yes or no or abstain. The List which obtains 50 per cent of the votes is elected *in toto*. There are provisions for a second List, if the Fascist List should be rejected. With exemplary fairness and sincerity, the régime has provided also for competing Lists to be put up by organisations of 5,000 members or more. My Fascist friends grin when I ask them what would happen if competing Lists were presented. Indeed, such a thing is unthinkable. Maraviglia, one of the Nationalists merged in the Fascist Party, explains that, as the law must even envisage politically impossible happenings, the legal solution has been provided ! Indeed, indeed ![1]

It is hardly necessary to know who has the right to vote in a system where there is no freedom to choose candidates. But there is no female suffrage. The principle of universal suffrage, based on the simple attainment of the age of twenty-one, has been rejected for the system whereby the vote is given as a return for the exercise of a social function. Thus the vote is obtained :

(1) as payer of the usual contribution to a worker's or employer's association ;

[1] *Alle Basi del Regime*, p. 69.

(2) as payer of direct taxes ;
(3) as salaried employee (stipend-receivers and " similar ") ;
(4) as a member of the clergy.

Though rejecting the view that " chronology " is a title to the vote, the age of twenty-one has been kept, except where a man is married, or a widower with offspring, when he is entitled to vote at eighteen. The learned commentator[1] on the Fascist Constitution cannot forbear the remark that the latter provision is " in homage to the principle of the solidarity of the family and to the ethical valuation of the social nucleus of the family, willed by Fascism ! "

The Chamber therefore is handpicked. All the members are members of the Fascist Party. They are members of the Fascist Party because the Associations who nominate them, while not consisting entirely of members of the Party, are yet firmly controlled by Fascists, either nominated or ratified by the Government, as we explain more carefully in the special section devoted to the Corporations. Membership of the Party brings them directly under the domination of the Duce, for the Party, according to the first article of the Statute, is at the orders of the Duce ; and there are all sorts of sanctions for such obedience, as we show later, from the oath of servitude to expulsion from the Party and banishment from public life.

As soon as the first election under the full Fascist régime had taken place in March 1929, the Grand Council of Fascism, which we presently discuss, passed resolutions on the position of the Chamber.

" The Grand Council reaffirms that the Chamber based on the Corporations has a political character and political functions and that the powers of the Fascist Deputies consist :

1. (*a*) in the diligent control of the administration of all the departments of the State, especially by means of the discussions of their Estimates ;
   (*b*) in the co-operation in the elaboration of bills proposed by the Government or initiated by Parliament.

2. The Grand Council considers that the Fascist Deputy who is suspended from any political activity [*as we show later, one of the*

[1] Professor and Senator Pietro Chimienti, *Manuale di Diritto constituzionale*, p. 282.

penalties for a serious breach of Party discipline] loses the right of frequenting Parliament and the Fascist Deputy expelled automatically loses his mandate.

3. The Grand Council decides that the Rules of Procedure of the Chamber shall be modernised in accordance with the character and functions of the new Chamber."[1]

But that is not all. To make the submission of the Chamber quite certain by formal conditions, the law relating to the Prime Minister lays it down that nothing can be put on the orders of the day (the agenda) without the assent of the Prime Minister. Nothing means *nothing* : no resolution for amendment, no question, no interpellation, no proposal of a bill. How effective this is will be seen from the figures of activity of the Chamber of 1929 compared with some of the years before the advent of the Fascist régime.

Between November 1913 and July 1917, the Government initiated 697 bills, private members 142 ; the Government secured the passage of 374 ; private members of 17. Thus, the Government had a large predominance, as in all modern systems of democratic government. In the Chamber of Deputies elected in March 1929, from its first session down to October 31st, 1933, the Government presented roughly 1,823 bills, withdrawing 14, leaving 119 in the course of discussion, and getting 1,690 passed. Obviously the " corporate " Chamber is much more amenable than the Parliaments of the democratic régime. Nor is that all. The total of private members' bills amounted to 11 ; 4 were withdrawn ; 2 were under discussion ; 5 were approved.

Now Parliament's function of grand inquest of the nation is at least as important as its legislative function. In this matter Samson's locks have been shorn even below the skin. In the pre-Fascist period over 220 interpellations were effectively presented and about 4,000 questions answered by the Government. In the Fascist period 4 interpellations were presented and dealt with (of course with the assent of the Government), and 115 oral questions were answered and 128 written. In England there are as many *each day*.

[1] Accomplished by the Reforms of April 29th, 1929, Document IV., No. 1. The principal change was to make it quite impossible for any business to be discussed without the approval of the Government, and introduces strict closure.

Decree-Laws. Most of the laws "passed" by Parliament are confirmations of decree-laws, that is to say decrees already promulgated by the Government, and having the force of law from the moment of publication, but requiring the ultimate assent of Parliament. As in most Continental constitutions, the Executive power in Italy always had a rather wide power of making decrees necessary to the execution of the laws—a wider power than in England, because the laws were drafted more generally and vaguely, and because, in spite of all the progress made in binding the Executive within responsible limits, the development was arrested. The various Courts, passing judgement on the "decree-laws" of doubtful validity, drew far more generous limits of permissibility than their English brethren. Their interpretation of "urgency," which was accepted as justification of the decrees, was extremely favourable to the Executive. But, as everywhere, both the judiciary and the liberal politicians became steadily more forbidding, for, quite apart from illegal interference with the person and property of citizens by these rules made without discussion, it not infrequently occurred that an apparently insignificant decree intentionally introduced a principle of law in conflict with statutes and judicial decisions.

With the advent of the Fascist régime, the politicians became naturally less powerful, and the Courts returned to the subservience of the 'eighties of last century. In December 1922, Parliament voted "full powers" to the Government to reorganise the bureaucracy and improve the fiscal organisation. In 1926, possessed of dictatorial power, the Government passed the law on the Faculty of the Executive Power to issue Juridical Rules (February 1st, 1926, No. 25). In some of the articles the law withdraws from Parliamentary decision certain affairs which the Constitution has expressly assigned to it, such as certain State Contracts, and the regulation of the Civil Service. The latter is particularly important, as it enables the Executive to transform the State service into a reward for loyalty to the Fascist Party.

Much more serious, however, is Art. 3, which allows the Government to make "rules having the force of law in extraordinary cases in which reasons of urgent and absolute necessity demand

it. The judgement of necessity and urgency is not subject to any outside control other than the political control of Parliament." Such rules must contain a clause that they will be presented to Parliament for conversion into law and, on pain of invalidation, be presented to one of the two Chambers for conversion into law not later than the third sitting after its publication. If either House refuses its assent, the rule is invalid. Amendments are possible. Parliament need not be called for some time (until the Budget needs to be voted), and in that time the Government is free. But the decree *must be* converted within two years, on pain of invalidity thereafter.

The Government's circular concerning the application of the law remarks on the "political and constitutional gravity" of the authority thus given to the Executive; and swears to its moderate and prudent use, declaring that it must be reserved only "for cases in which it appears inevitable for the safeguarding of the superior interests of the State."

It is a queer but characteristic comment that is made on this law by Chimienti, well illustrating how a Dictatorship always gets the best of both worlds. When it is necessary for a dictatorial Executive Power to justify its control of the legislature and the judiciary, it does so by saying that the theory of the *separation of powers* is an obstacle to good government, since all the powers must move simultaneously and harmoniously. As soon as it is necessary to justify the usurpation of legislative powers, the learned professor tells us, "the principle of the division of powers has been brought back to its true nature,"[1] since the Executive has re-appropriated the powers it ought to have.

In practice the Fascist Government has used this power for matters which can only be interpreted as "of absolute and urgent necessity" by legislation in a super-sensitive state of mind, as for example, the elaboration of the Balilla organisation.

The Significance of the Fascist Parliament. What, then, is the significance of the Fascist Parliament? First, it does a large amount of work of secondary importance in Committee. Usually Continental legislatures settle the principles

[1] Op. cit., p. 216.

of a bill in Committee, unlike the British House of Commons, which prefers to vote on these in full assembly. In the Fascist Chamber the activity of the Commissions is limited to a revisory function exercised within very narrow limits, for the principle of the bill is settled by Mussolini, the Grand Council, and the relevant Ministers. This can be seen by the examination of any bill of major importance. The proceedings in the full Assembly are confined to a report by the appropriate Minister, called *la relazione*, after which no debate, but a succession of sugary eulogies of the bill, the Minister, the Government, Mussolini, and the Revolution follow. Only very rarely is there any statement of dissatisfaction, and then it is couched in the innocuous form of a question insinuated into the speech. What I have said of ordinary bills holds good also of the Estimates. In other words, the Chamber is nothing but a revising body without the power of rejection or material amendment, though it has the power to suggest improvements in Committee and in the lobbies. Public expression of disapproval does not and cannot arise. From the standpoint of the public, the Chambers seem to be agreed on everything the Duce has proposed, and to be engaged on nothing but singing hymns to his omniscience and infallibility. Too bad that there are only about 55 parliamentary days per year ! In England we still think that Parliament cannot do enough sound work with 160 days.

However, membership of Parliament still carries with it enough prestige to cause the rank and file of the Party to battle fiercely for inclusion in the List of Candidates. There is terrific disappointment, stimulated by the discreet jeers of fellow Fascists, at failure. After all, within a closed and limited governing class any set-back is cumulative in effect. There are, consequently, busy backstairs intrigues among the State representatives like the Prefects of the Provinces, and the local clique of Fascist officials and bosses, and the syndical officials, regarding these nominations. There is a surprising anxiety about the appointments and dismissals of the Prefects round about nomination time. One would have expected the entire demise of the old system of looking to these officials, except that the Prefect has been made the local Mussolini. He has been given even more importance, as the controller and co-ordinator of all

the political and administrative life of the entire Province, than his democratic predecessors. But, of course, membership of Parliament puts one in the running for a Ministerial post; it makes one quite plainly one of the élite; it gives power as in the old days in regard to administrative favours, certainly not as corrupt, but as welcome, even within the bounds of legality; it brings men nearer to the person of Mussolini; it brings one in earshot of the Governmental secrets and scandals; it brings a salary of 24,000 lire a year[1]; it carries with it the title of "Honourable" and a medal.

It may be asked, "If Parliament is so powerless, and if the Fascist doctrine is so contemptuous of the parliamentary system, why is Parliament still in existence some twelve years after the March on Rome?" The explanation is not far to seek. Until the end of 1925, the Dictatorship had not become absolute either in theory or practice. The so-called Corporative system was not yet invented, even on paper. Nor is Mussolini for ever bound by his own controversial exaggerations. No one better than he can see the value of a forum of opinion to which he can turn to make his own explanations in formal utterance. As he once said, sarcastically, a Parliament is a plaything, but may be also a plaything that the people like to have. He can sense the opinion of a slavish Parliament even in incoherent cries and gestures and facial expression. He may learn, at any rate, what the public will not stand; and it is the essence of Mussolini's Dictatorship that it is keenly on the scent of popular opinion. He is not a mere tyrant. For all the courage and vaunted independence of the man, he will not live a life of complete isolation and ultimate responsibility if he can avoid it, and a Parliament is a comfort when the Prime Minister can return to his villa thinking, "Well, after all, I *am* in tune with the people," or, "So I *was* right to insist on my own opinion at the session of the Grand Council when X contradicted me: indeed he almost shook my faith in my own proposition. Now it is settled"; or "It is clear that I have over- or under-estimated such and such a force or man: I must make allowances for my error in the future and handle the matter differently." Mussolini has too often insisted

[1] Until 1925 the salary was only 15,000 lire. The new amount was subject to a 12 per cent cut in 1930 and another in 1934.

on the potential importance of the rise of new talent in the provinces (his own is the example that so affects him) not to want a forum in which all the faces of the aspirants for power are to be seen. He himself has said that rather than leave an assembly, he prefers to be in it to hear what is going on and to make his plans accordingly.

In the light of Parliament's impotence, it is not necessary to stress the fact that the Grand Council, in making up the List of Candidates, has favoured the employers and the professional classes, though the Charter of Labour declared for equal representation of employers and employed in the corporative organs of the régime. When majorities mean *nothing* in a Parliament, and when laws are drafted with the ready assistance of deputations from employers, employees and cultural associations, the fact that employers have 10 per cent more representation than employees does not matter.[1]

Parliament has two uses of great importance to the Fascist Party. The Fascist doctrine makes it quite clear that the régime is not regarded as one founded on the principle of election, and it publicly insists that a 100 per cent vote of all the registered voters in its favour would not make it any more sure of its authority, nor would its total rejection by the people cause it to swerve a hairsbreadth from its path, still less abdicate. Nevertheless, men have need of approval; the Fascists are grateful for it; in fact they even seek for it, and not merely with flickering candles. The Fascist régime is obsessed with the craving for unanimity. It pretends to regard the thousands of letters received by the Party, by the Ministers, and by Mussolini himself, as a kind of continuous and favourable plebiscite. Yet it craves for more. The parliamentary elections therefore serve as a five-yearly stage of extraordinary propaganda and a search after the souls of the people. Those who have lived in Italy during a plebiscite cannot have failed to notice the terrific pressure brought to bear upon the country by the Party. In politics deliberate effort is only directed to the achievement of what is really wanted, and the effort is usually proportionate to the sting of the want. From Mussolini downwards to the smallest

[1] Thus in Rosenstock-Franck, *L'Economie Corporative Fasciste en doctrine et en fait*, p. 248. This is an excellent piece of work.

Fascist Balilla, all the forces of the Party unite to push the voters into the polling booths. There are loudspeakers yelling all day. There are flags; songs; radio appeals; cunning posters. The newspapers "feature" only one thing. The youth organisations are out in uniform and hanging on the motor-lorries, evoking the memory of the days of the punitive expeditions. The trade union officials get to work on their members.

All Fascist office-holders are excited. But I have *never* experienced such apathy among voters. Of course, it is a foregone conclusion, and they vote, laughing at the humbug. In spite of this the Party values the testimony of the polls. It is the nemesis of dictatorships that they are more tormented morally by the defection of a single voter than democracies. The election results are inscribed on the public buildings throughout the country, that no one may forget between one plebiscite and another. The *Corriere della Sera* delicately expresses the current opinion thus. On the day before the election (March 25th, 1934):

"The Italian people furnish every day the proofs of possessing these qualities (approval of the Fascist revolution and policy, unity of mind, good will, firm faith) and of having put them at the disposal of the régime, for the greatness of the Fatherland; but no demonstration can be so explicit as this plebiscite, to which all of us are called: it will give the reply asked for in the most persuasive and indisputable form, namely in figures."

On the day *after* the elections:

"In other words the Plebiscite has had, taken as a whole, in its contents as well as in its form, an immense 'moral' value. No more than this was asked of the Italian people. No one believed that the elections could be a 'consultation' of a political character: that the régime was asking the Italian people for its consent, and that from the response there could or would be measured that consent. . . ."

So that, in a way, the Parliament remains the by-product of the necessity for popular approval. Of course, it would be possible to have a plebiscite on the Duce only. It would appear strange, however, if Mussolini, who made the régime and

selected himself as leader, should suddenly abolish the elections for Parliament and submit himself to popular election. As far away from the public as possible is the best policy for a Dictator's own authority. (This, however, does not imply lack of contact to learn its wants and hopes directly from the people.) The election is a great occasion for revivifying the missionary and warlike spirit of the members of the Party, for deposing some members into the category of ordinary rank-and-file, and rewarding others.

It is not insignificant, either, that Mussolini's advisers suggested the advertisement of 7,000 Civil Service posts open to competition a few months before the March 1934 election as a *bonne bouche* to the middle classes, *in view of the election* ![1] Nor that the " voluntary " conversion loan from 5 per cent to 3½ per cent came *after* the elections.

The country is literally plastered with the word " *Sì !* "— " Vote Yes ! " The Duce appeals for gratitude: " On March 25th (1934), a plebiscitary vote must affirm the primacy of Fascist Italy, and the love of the people for the Duce." " The 25th March must be for you," runs the appeal to the workers and " Leisure Time " members, " a day of holiday and joy. Respond to the appeal of the Duce by going to deposit your ' Yes ! ' of gratitude and consent."

Two voting papers are handed to the voter, both white on the outside; on the inside one says "Yes!" and the national colours are shown on it ; on the other a pale "No ! " appears. The voter, according to the law, should throw away the rejected slip into a sealed box, and give his vote to the presiding officer, who puts it into the ballot box. But the presiding officers are Fascists ; there are Fascist Militiamen in their uniforms all about the place ; the youth organisations are shrieking outside ; and the returning officers have ways of marking the rejected slips so that they can, or give the impression that they can, detect " ungrateful " people. When we take these matters into account and all the other methods of smothering opposition, it is not surprising that in the election of 1929 the list received 8,517,838 " Yes " and only 135,773 " No," and in 1934, 10,043,000 " Yes " and only 15,265 " No " !

[1] I can, but I will not, divulge the name of my informant.

Now besides this reason for the continued existence of the Chamber there is another, perhaps even more important. Mussolini alleges that he wishes to train the Italian people to a sense of political responsibility. He has excluded the only effective way of doing this, namely, by actually leaving them to find their path freely through free institutions. His substitute is a series of occupational associations (employers' associations and trade unions) in which the elective system is provided for by the terms of their constitutions. By a limitation of their interest to the problems of their own particular craft or business, they would in time (according to Syndicalist and Guild Socialist theory) learn the price that inevitably has to be paid for every policy, and learn to appreciate that price in relation to the advantages offered by the policy. Now all this leads, as in the Guild Socialist theories, to a disintegration of the State, and later on we show how conscious the Fascists themselves are of the disintegrative dangers of their own constitution.[1] If this political disintegration is to be avoided, somewhere or another there must be an institution representing the whole State as the final will-organisation. If Parliament were swept away, one man only, Mussolini or his successor, would stand face to face with a series of egoistic elective bodies. This would be a weaker State than that in which a body elected by the whole people to represent the *Nation*, great and glorious word to conjure with in Fascist Italy, is a central collaborator with the Executive, even if only a feeble collaborator. The recent formation of the Corporations (November 1933 to November 1934) has once more raised the problem of Parliament. Mussolini said on November 13th, 1933) :

" The Chamber at a certain point will have to decide its own fate. . . . It is perfectly conceivable that a National Council of Corporations may substitute *in toto* the existence of the Chamber of Deputies : the Chamber of Deputies has never pleased me. Fundamentally, this Chamber of Deputies was always an anachronism, even in its title ; it is an institution which we found, and which is alien to our mentality and our passion as Fascists. The Chamber presupposes a world which we have demolished ; it presupposes a plurality of parties and often and readily the attack on the Ministerial coach. From the day in

[1] Chapter XVII. below.

which we annulled this plurality the Chamber of Deputies lost the essential motive of its origin. . . . All this will come after some time, because we have no haste. It is important simply to establish the principle, because from the principle all the fatal consequences derive."

Now as soon as the Duce stamps his foot, all the publicists and professors start up and bear witness. So on this occasion also. Some argue that the next step is simply the abolition of Parliament and its replacement by the Council of the Corporations—that is the direct representatives of the economic categories.

Others want a Party representation within a Council and Parliament founded on the Corporations. A third alternative is the substitution of a congress of the Fascist Party for Parliament. Critics have observed that this last would be a dangerous introduction of the elective system, and that the public would be treated to the spectacle of differences in the Party itself. People are accustomed to overt disagreement in Parliaments, but who would care to make public such a difference of opinion, for example, as occurred at the Congress of Syndical and Corporative Studies at Ferrara in 1932[1] (when someone elaborated the theory of public ownership of the means of production) over the whole range of public policy? Inevitably the Fascist Party (as I know from personal observation) would become several parties, as far divided as Communism is from *laissez faire*.

So the Parliament remains. Meanwhile, as usual, Mussolini thinks: Let us be vigilant, let us not engage ourselves irrevocably to any principle, but let us first observe the working of these Corporations about which I am not at all as sure as the professors; and then we shall make up our minds what to do when the matter really passes.[2] After all, 400 seats in Parliament make 400 jobs for a very hungry crowd of assistants who are needed to keep the people obedient to the Duce.

Thus, so far as the Council of Ministers and Parliament are concerned, the supreme and deciding authority is the Chief of the Government. This central situation and controlling power he also occupies in relation to the Corporations, which exercise an

[1] Cf. *Atti del Secondo Convegno di Studi Sindacali e Corporativo*, III. 149 ff.
[2] Confirmed in his speech of January 13th, 1934.

advisory and minor law-making authority, but which may be, we cannot yet say for certain will be, destined to enjoy a function surpassing in importance that of any other agency of government in the future Fascist State. The Chief of the Government is the Presiding Officer over the Council of Corporations and its Assembly, and he, his Ministers, or their deputies, preside at the deliberations of the Corporations severally. Thus, since he is the master of the Ministers and their deputies, he is the integrating and supervising authority in the "Corporative" life of the country also. Also the presiding officers of the confederations are appointed by the Minister of Corporations, which Ministry can be held by the Chief of the Government, and has been held by Mussolini with a slight interval since 1926.

The Civil Service and Local Government. We have indicated that the Civil Service and the local authorities are stringently subject to the central authority, and in particular to the Head of the Government. In democracies Governments admit, and even command, the freedom of the official from ties to any party or form of the State. Efforts are concentrated upon securing the loyalty of the official to the State as such, and his political neutrality in the sense that he will equally, energetically and impartially serve whatever political parties assume the reins of government. This, of course, is not the Fascist view. There were opponents of Fascism throughout the central and the local bodies of public officials, and, in the course of the first few years of Fascist domination, these were retired from the service or dismissed altogether, while other waverers were subject to the threat of such treatment if they did not do as they were told.

In 1923, in pursuance of plans already prepared by a pre-Fascist Parliamentary Commission of Enquiry,[1] the Fascist Government established the reorganisation of the service by the Royal Decree of December 30th, 1923.[2] Among the means which enable the political authority to acquire complete control over the service are these. Article 1 of the Decree lays down as a condition of appointment the rule that the candidate must "At all times

[1] Spaventa, *Burocrazia*, 1928.

[2] *Disposizioni sullo Stato Giuridico degli Impiegati Civili*, January 1924.

have observed good civil, moral, and political conduct, to be determined by the department alone." In recent years the rules of competition for each department have interpreted this as, at least, membership of the Fascist Party. *No one, to-day, can obtain employment either in the central authority or the local authorities unless he is a member of the Party.*

Secondly, upon assuming office, employees must take an oath which runs as follows :

" I swear that I will be faithful to the King and to his royal successors; and that I will loyally observe the Constitution and the other laws of the State ; and that I will faithfully perform all the duties of my office with diligence and zeal for the public good, and in the interest of the department, scrupulously keeping the secrets of office and conforming my public and private conduct to the dignity of the office. I swear that I do not belong to an association or party whose activities are not in harmony with my official duties, nor will I belong to one. I swear to perform all my duties exclusively for the inseparable good of the King and of the mother-land."[1]

When this oath is violated it is open to the Government to take disciplinary action up to the extreme of dismissal from the service. In addition, dismissal can follow upon the " public manifestation " of ideals contrary to existing institutions. The events of 1924 and 1925 caused the Government to take more severe and direct measures. A law was passed on December 24th, 1925, permitting the State to discharge Civil Servants (including local officials) who, " by reason of acts committed either in or out of office, do not give full guarantee of a complete faith in their duties, or who make themselves incompatible with the general political aims of the Government."

In defending this purgative measure Professor Alfred Rocco, then Minister of Justice, elaborated the following argument :

" It is an unavoidable necessity of the State, that all those who belong to public administration must not only absolve with scrupulous regularity the specific duties of their office, but further carry out every activity in whatever form, with intimate, convinced, and sincere devotion to the State, in the particular positive order which it assumes at a determinate historic phase of its development. This

[1] Decree, Art. 6.

follows from the very nature of the relationship of public employment, according to the fundamental conception of it, as laid down by the national Government, as a militia into which one enters and in which one has the title to remain only when conscience, which inspires and upholds the work, responds to the impulses not of an enforced exterior discipline, but to a spontaneous spiritual persuasion, concentrated in the oath. . . . This supreme exigency implies that the public official must be considered as unsatisfactory for his duties, not only for the material inobservance of single legislative or regulation dispositions, which discipline bureaucratic action, but also for attitudes which contrast with the national spirit, from which those dispositions, like any other law of the State, have drawn their life."[1]

Since that time the Fascist régime has, of course, been able to draw its Civil Servants from the young men who come from the secondary schools and the universities, subject to all those arrangements for instilling the Fascist conception of the State and the nation which are discussed at length in later chapters. They no longer have any serious anxiety about their loyalty.

Under the democratic system, the officials formed associations for the protection of their rights, and the industrial staffs were involved in the disturbances of Italian life by strikes between 1919 and 1922. The law of April 3rd, 1926, on the legal discipline and collective relations of labour (the first instalment of the "Corporate" system), regulated the right of association of Government officials, local as well as central. The principal feature of this is that the associations are placed immediately under the Fascist Party. The business of the associations is "to foster the formation of a Fascist conscience in their members."[2] Naturally, the Ministry of Corporations has a controlling power over them from the economic point of view.

There have been no notable administrative inventions by the Fascist régime,[3] except, perhaps, the Corporations, which are to act as decentralised administrative bodies, in order to achieve an organisation and a morale half-way between the public irresponsibility and the technical agility of private enterprise and the public responsibility and heavy routine of the ordinary

[1] Cf. Rocco, *La Trasformazione dello Stato*, 74, 75.
[2] Cf. *Statuto del Partito*, 1933 edn., p. 85.
[3] Cf. Gangemi, *Elementi di Amministrazione Finanziaria Pubblica*, 1934.

Departments of State. Whatever extra energy is manifest in the Fascist Civil Service, if any at all, and of this I am doubtful, is due less to new technique and original methods of training (for there are none) than to the personality of Mussolini.

Now, one branch of the Civil Service is the Judiciary. This is not, as in England, selected from the Bar, and subject to removal only by an address of both Houses of Parliament, but is appointed by the Government from the successful candidates at the appropriate open competitive examinations (whence one proceeds by promotion), and is dismissable by the summary action of the Government. Before the advent of Fascism this process was subject to the independent control of the profession itself, since Italy had absorbed the civilised tradition of judicial impartiality, a tradition, be it remarked, as precarious as it is precious. But the idea of the separation of powers upon which this is based is repugnant to revolutionists and dictators. The qualifications for admission, the tenure and the oath are not in the interests of a proper balance of rights and obligations between individual and State. The only distinction between administrative officers and judges as to dismissal is that in the case of judges, dismissal can only occur after a special meeting of the Cabinet. Certain law-courts have been put directly under the presidency of the chief of State; among these are the Court of Accounts, the supreme financial controller of the administration, and the *Consiglio di Stato*, the supreme administrative court.

The local government system of Italy, in spite of pretentious doctrines of municipal liberty, was always subject to strong central control. Yet this was mitigated by the considerable power vested in the locally elected Mayors and Municipal Councils, the elected Provincial Councils, and the Giunta (which controlled the Prefect) composed in part of delegates from the various municipalities. Between 1925 and 1928[1] all the elected bodies were abolished, and in their place were established committees to co-operate with the Prefect in the Province and the Podestà (now appointed by the Ministry of the Interior) in the Municipality. It is not necessary to enter into a detailed discussion of the mode of appointment of these committees. It is enough to say that they are constituted by appointment by the

[1] Cf. Macciotta e Vittorelli, *Commento Legge Communale e Provinciale*, 1934.

various recognised associations of employers and employees, and by direct appointment by the Fascist Party officials. What Mussolini intended to get he described in the Senate (October 8th, 1923).

" It is simply monstrous to think that in a unitary State the minor public bodies may follow political ends in contrast with those of the Government of the State, or in any way put their power to the service of political groups which are adversary of these ends. The institution of the Podestà puts an end to this monstrosity."

In order to secure a greater concentration of authority in the hands of the centre, the Government made the Prefect much more powerful. His sanctioning power over the resolutions and the budget of the local authorities was increased, but of even greater importance was the enhancement of his general authority, and his endowment with a continuous inspectorial function over the municipalities in his area. As regards the former, the law (April 3rd, 1926) says :

" The Prefect is the highest authority of the State in the Province. He is the direct representative of the Executive Power. The Prefect is head of all the life of the Province, which receives its impulse, and its co-ordination and directing principles, from him. It is the duty of the Prefect to assure, in conformity with the general line of policy laid down by the Government, the unity of the political direction in the various services of the State, and the local authorities, co-ordinating the action of all the public departments and supervising the services, excepting those concerning the administration of justice, war, navy, air forces, and railways. He exercises the powers attributed to him by the laws and promotes, where necessary, the regulation of the powers between the administrative and the judicial authority. He adopts, in case of necessity or urgency, the measures which he thinks to be necessary in the public interest. . . . He controls the public order and superintends public security : disposes of the public forces and may require the employment of the other armed forces."

The Prefect is dignified by the title of Excellency—a gift of the régime. He is directly dependent on the Ministry of the Interior—of which Mussolini is the head. To him the Law of October 23rd, 1925, gave a close inspectorial power over the whole province, with a jurisdiction concerning not merely the

laws and regulations, but also " ordered functioning and regular progress." The Ministry of the Interior, in the Estimates discussions of 1930, declared itself well satisfied with the working of this new arrangement.

The result of this system is that the Chief of the Government has a very efficient and pliable instrument for his own purposes, the foremost of which is to keep in power and impose a uniform policy all over the country. It is not within his purpose to provide the opportunity of local creativeness or any of the traditional values we associate with local self-government, for example, the cultural effect of participating with independent power in the government of the local community, the maintenance of a focus of political attraction and interest for the informed and politically conscious among the citizens, the opportunity of a training in government on a small scale, and the advantages of free public criticism of the measures designed for the local welfare.

My investigations show that whatever of energy there is in Italian local government to-day is a derivative of the central power. There is a busy going and coming between Rome and the Provinces, and Mussolini has made the Grand Report of the Prefects one of the outstanding events of the régime. The Central energy operates through the Prefects, but perhaps more through the energetic members of the corps of Secretaries-General, the chiefs of the administrative staff of the municipalities, and the Secretaries of the Provinces. In August 17th, 1928, these were made State officials. They enter the service of the locality after the passage of a stiff competitive examination. These officials and the subordinate staff are the instruments of the power of the State transmitted through Prefect and Podestà, who are chosen from the wealthy and upper middle classes. The local advisory committees, having no real power, and being almost exclusively middle-class and upper-class in their composition (because the associations who choose them are altogether of these classes or dominated by them), and further amenable to Fascist Party discipline, do as little as Parliament does at the centre in relation to the Government. They mainly exercise their powers of applause. The Podestà now declare how much easier it is to govern than it was formerly! But, unlike the central Parliament, the local *Consultà* are able to divert local activities into channels

suitable to their own interests ; or better still, to put the brake on local expenditure. The work of the local authorities since the establishment of Fascism has been largely the carrying out of the public-works schemes decided upon, organised, and forced on by the Central Government—a state of affairs satisfactory to the régime. I have heard a number of complaints of slackness, favouritism in contracts and employment, and irresponsiveness to public needs, which were put down to the lack of effective local councils.

The Grand Council of Fascism. The Chief of the Government, then, is in a strict sense the heart and will in the chief agencies of the State. How is he chosen and what are his links with the Party ? Nothing in the Statute of the Party says that the Duce, to whom the whole Party owes obedience, shall be the Chief of the Government to whom all citizens owe obedience. The identity between the two offices must be established by some formal act if the Fascist system is to be regarded, as the Fascists wish it to be regarded, as a permanent constitution for Italy. Some arrangement must establish a perpetuity of Chiefs of Government and Duces of the Fascist Party who shall be one and the same man, otherwise it might fall out that the King could choose a Prime Minister who would be at loggerheads with the Duce of the Party. I put the case, not because it is likely to happen, short of a revolution, but because the problem is inherent in the nature of the system. The simultaneous choice is effected by the organ of Government called the Grand Council of Fascism.

Commenting upon this institution, Gentile said :

> " By means of this organ the will of an extraordinarily gifted man becomes an organic and perennial institution. That which might seem the everyday but contingent creation of any individual becomes the constitutional structure of the nation itself."[1]

He also said that this produces a tri-cameral system. Surely, however, it is truer to say that it introduces a single-chamber system in which the Council is the only Chamber, and that in

[1] *Origini e dottrine*. p. 77.

this Chamber the Duce, Mussolini, is not only legally, but also actually, the only ruling will. Let us describe the powers and status of this body.

Its Constitution. The Grand Council of Fascism was established as a part of the Italian Constitution by the normal process of law on December 9th, 1928,[1] amended by the law of December 14th, 1929.[2] It is defined as "the supreme organ which co-ordinates and integrates all the activities of the régime which issued from the Revolution of October 1922."

Mussolini, in presenting the measure to Parliament, called it "the organ of synthesis and connection" and said that while the personal synthesis of the State is made concrete in the august person of the King, the supreme chief, the collective synthesis of the various organisations of the State is realised in the Grand Council. Its functions are broadly described as "deliberative in the cases laid down by the law, and further, it gives its views on every other question, political, economic or social, of national interest upon which it *may be* questioned by the Chief of the Government."

Who constitutes this Council? The Chief of the Government is, of right, its President. Then follows the extremely important provision: *he convenes it when he considers this necessary and fixes its agenda.* In other words, he is not merely in the relation of an ordinary chairman to it, he not only has the power of order and discipline, and the prestige of the office of chairman, but unless he wishes the Council need not meet at all (in non-constitutional matters), and when it meets he is the master of its activity.

The other members fall into three classes. The first includes the Secretary of the National Fascist Party, and the Quadrumvirs of the March on Rome "without limit of time." The secretary of the Party acts as secretary of the Council, and to him the Chief of the Government may delegate the convening and chairmanship of the Council in case of his own absence, inability to attend, or the vacancy of the office. Then, *ex officio*, for the duration of their functions, the Presidents of the Senate

[1] Ordinamenti e attribuzioni del Gran Consiglio del Fascismo, No. 2693.

[2] Modifiche alla Legge 9 dicembre, 1928, No. 2693, sull' ordinamento .... e norme per l'ordinamento del Partito Nazionale Fascista.

and the Chamber of Deputies ; the Ministers for Foreign Affairs, the Interior, Justice, Finance, Education, Agriculture and Forests, and Corporations (these are by right members of the Cabinet) ; the President of the Royal Academy of Italy ; the Secretary and the two Vice-secretaries of the National Fascist Party ; the Commander General of the Voluntary Militia for the Security of the Nation (hereafter referred to as the Militia) ; the President of the Tribunal for the Defence of the State ; the Presidents of the National Fascist Confederations and of the National Confederations of Fascist Trade Unions in Industry and Agriculture. The third class is composed of members nominated by a decree of the Chief of the Government for the period of three years, with the possibility of re-appointment, from among those who have " rendered meritorious service to the nation and the cause of the Fascist Revolution as members of the Government or secretaries of the Fascist Party since 1922 or in other capacities." The decree of the Chief of Government is final, as is also his decree of revocation which may be made at any time. This offers the Chief of the Government a certain freedom from the pressure of the regular members who might be opposed to him, since he could at need appoint a number of his friends to overwhelm them in argument and numbers.

The principal difference between the composition of the Council according to the original law and the amended form lies in the reduction in the number of members who are *ex officio* and sit for an unlimited time, and the passing over to the Chief of the Government of the power to choose members from these categories. But the chief of the Government can no longer appoint experts for particular discussions as under the original law, excepting under the comprehensive form of " rendered meritorious services . . . or in other capacities."

Functions of Grand Council. The functions of the Grand Council fall into two classes, those concerning the Fascist Party, and those concerning the State. In the first category are the determination of the final list of candidates for election to the Chamber of Deputies, with the power of striking out and adding to the nominations submitted by the Confederations ; discussion of the constitution (even to details and interpretation

of the constitution) and the political aims of the National Fascist Party; discussion of the nomination and dismissal of the Secretary, Vice-Secretary, the Administrative Secretary and the other members of the Party. The constitution of the Fascist Party is approvable by royal decree on the proposition of the Chief of the Government, after consultation of the Grand Council and the Council of Ministers.

The Grand Council's functions of State are of high importance. It *must* be consulted (no more than *consulted*, but no less than *must*) on all questions having a "constitutional" character. That is to say, the Italian Constitution, which was formerly similar to the British Constitution in not possessing a special amending process for constitutional laws (though it had a *written* Constitution), Parliament being competent in its ordinary process of legislation to effect the changes it deemed necessary, now includes the extra process of submission to the Grand Council before even the Cabinet or the Chief of the Government can submit the proposals to Parliament. That is what it seems to mean to a foreign observer, and this is confirmed in Mussolini's explanation of the bill to the Chamber:

"This means not only the guarantee of a more mature examination, but also the impossibility of presenting to Parliament a proposal on these particular matters without the assent of the Government, upon whom the convening of the Grand Council devolves. . . . In virtue of the new arrangements there will be a greater stability assured to the fundamental institutions of the State. . . . The judicial authority in the exercise of its control of legality will from now on be authorised to deny observance to constitutional laws passed without the formality of previous examination by the Grand Council."

Whether "questions having a constitutional character" are defined illustratively, rather than limitatively, in the list which is actually given, is not discussed by Italian jurists: the list seems to be exhaustive. "Laws are considered *always* as having a constitutional character when they concern:

"The succession to the throne, the attributions and the prerogatives of the Crown;

"The composition and the functioning of the Grand Council, the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies;

"The attributions and the prerogatives of the Chief of the Government, Prime Minister, Secretary of State;

"The power of the Executive Authority to issue juridical rules (laws in the form of decrees not passing through the usual parliamentary procedure);

"The syndical and corporative order;

"The relations between the State and the Holy See;

"International Treaties which involve changes in the territory of the State and the Colonies, or even renunciation of the acquisition of territories."

These are all questions of fundamental importance which the Party chiefs no doubt thought should not be left to the decision of a single man, however great, and certainly not to that of any ordinary member of Parliament. They are of such grave concern to the Party as an entity, which, while different from the State, was yet involved in it as its only prop, that these were made the concern of this body whose mind is composed of two hemispheres, one of the State and the other of the Party. Perhaps it is no digression to observe that successful revolutions and still more *coups d'état*, attempt to fix themselves in position by a rigid constitution, and they are as much troubled to do this out of a certain mutual mistrust of the leaders in the councils of the revolution as by the desire to perpetuate the régime against the attacks of enemies from without.

It Names the Prime Minister. Nor do the functions of the Council end there. It has a power potentially more significant than all those yet mentioned. It is the authority to which, failing a revolution, which puts us beyond the range of law and of legal prediction, we must look for the automatic proposal of the name of the next Chief of the Government and, therefore, according to the philosophy of the Fascist State, the next Duce of the Party. *Upon the proposal of the Chief of the Government*, the Grand Council forms and keeps up to date the list of the names to be presented to the Crown for appointment as Chief of the Government in case this office is vacant. There is another clause also:

"The attributions and prerogatives of the Chief of the Government remaining untouched, the Grand Council further draws up and keeps

up to date the list of the persons who, in cases of vacancy, it considers suitable to assume the functions of Government."

This is a plain and simple implication of the Fascist State, and the Fascists recognise it, but, as usual, unwilling to admit that their régime is nothing but a dictatorship, attempt to give it an old-world respectable flavour. Fascists are at pains to point out that the Crown is not obliged to agree to the nominee of the Council. And Mussolini explained the article thus :

" In every constitutional State the Crown, before proceeding to the choice of its Ministers, consults the most eminent men in the State. In the Parliamentary régime there had been created a real and just right of consultation, reserved, however, to a few men considered as leaders of Parliament, especially of the elected Chamber, and interpreters of its will. This was a consequence of the usurpation[1] of sovereignty carried out by the Chamber of Deputies to the damage of the other authorities of the State. It is natural that in the Fascist régime, which is ever a constitutional régime, this right of proposal should be conserved, but that it should be transformed in a manner to render it altogether consistent with the Fascist conception of the State. As the Grand Council gathers together all the forces of the régime, and is its most complete synthesis, it is natural that there should be conferred on it the faculty of proposing respectfully to the Crown the persons deemed the most able to assume the Government of the State."

But, argues Mussolini, this power is only " a right of proposal which does not injure the right to decide, which belongs inseparably to the Sovereign." Is it then the Fascist theory of the State to let the Crown decide ? Let me answer as " bluntly " as Mussolini speaks to the peasants. It is not. This is pure cant. The Fascist Grand Council would allow the King to decide differently from its proposal only if the King had the force and will to shoot down the Party which the Council leads. This is a piece of demagoguery worthy only of the mind of democracy, which Mussolini said he believed he was right in destroying precisely for exhibitions of this sort.

Thus the Grand Council stands in the very centre of the State

[1] " Usurpation " of all words ! This is an example of pure effrontery so often met with in Fascist circles, and one does not know whether to call it callous impertinence or fanatical blindness.

and the Party. It is linked with the Council of Ministers, with the Chambers, with the Constitution, with the leaders of the Party, and through them, and the fact they have to follow the general policy laid down by the Grand Council, with all the outlying agents of the Party in all its forms, propagandist, repressive, and charitable.

In the very centre of this central agency, is the Chief of the Government and the Duce. He is the master of the Grand Council, for he need not convene it. But his power is qualified in "constitutional" matters; there the Council can only be disregarded by a breach of the law of the land, for the law on the Grand Council is not merely a Fascist Party rule, but a law made by the collaboration of the Chamber, the Senate and the Crown. If he cares for legality—and the reputation of legality is a usurper's best card—his will is bound to the extent that he must convince the Council to let him have his own way, should he wish to carry it with him. A wise statesman, even if a dictator, does not too often employ the force of his prestige and self-assurance to overpower the intellectual considerations, or merely the pride, of capable men. Even then, if he likes, he need not take the advice of the Council: the law says simply that its advice is to be sought. Into its hands, in the case of vacancy of, or incapacity for, the office, falls the power of appointing a successor, and it is obvious that only a man would be selected as Chief of the Government who would be acceptable as Leader of the Party; otherwise the "totalitarian," or, to be candid, the "dictatorial," system would fall to pieces. Spread out under the throne of the Chief of Government-Duce, there is the foundation of the Grand Council of Fascism. If this sustains and gives him advice and authority, it is his status and prestige which in turn gives it its weight. The Duce can shuffle backwards and forwards between the Grand Council of Fascism and the Cabinet of the Kingdom of Italy; as far as principle goes, the former is master over the latter. It is, surely, only in a formal sense that one can say that the last word is with the Cabinet. Mussolini says that the Cabinet has the last word; he must surely refer only to the legal "rubber stamp" aspect of the matter. But everyone knows that the first and last word, *politically*, lies with the Grand Council.

This is the organ in which, in fact, all the important decisions regarding State and Party are excogitated and irrevocably settled, except for the concessions which have to be made to interests too powerful to override and to sound arguments which arise in the course of a wider, if not a nation-wide, deliberation.

Naturally, it became the chief ambition to be included in this body; and it at once assumed the character of a representative body, with 30 as its usual number, rather large for effective and not too protracted discussions. The present law brings down the regular number to something like 20 regular, and five or six additional, members.

Here, in mysterious sittings, which are fixed for late in the evening, and which usually rise in the early hours of the morning, the fullest, frankest discussions in the whole of Italy are to be heard. A pretence is kept up that the public is on tip-toe to know what it is deciding. "Most lively awaiting of its decisions" say the State-controlled headlines of the Press. The public does not give a damn for the Council. The proceedings are by law, and in fact, secret; and the public receive only a curt message as to their agenda and conclusions, often, as in the case of salary cuts and reductions of prices and rents, in such broad terms that, in fact, secrecy is observed as effectively as if nothing were said. But, inside, all cards are laid on the table, excepting for a few time-servers who have not the courage to express their doubts. It is here that Mussolini, who has suitably prepared himself by sedulous coaching, is able to exhibit those magistral qualities of omniscience in principle, and readiness in detail, which are such spell-weaving revelations to his colleagues. Here, in the midnight sessions, sometimes ending only with the dawn (not in Winter), the voice of the Duce is not infrequently heard for more than an uninterrupted hour, commanding, demonstrating, wooing and winning. Here the full storm, the raging tempest, of black brows and sweeping gestures and thumping fists, accompanies the lightning flashes over the horizon to be lighted up "for the cause of the Revolution." And when the resolutions have been passed, and the queer clairvoyance of a sleepless night need no longer be held under control, the comrades, realising the importance of the work

just done, praise each other fittingly. So, at the end of "the historic session" of September 22nd, 1928, when various laws to execute the Charter of Labour were resolved upon, the Secretary of the Party, Turati, said "Stay!" He wished to "express to the Duce all the joyous faith and pride of the Party which had been carried by the will of its leader to the vision of its future aims and the consciousness of its continuity for the greatness of the Italian people and the victory of the Revolution." He "expressed the certainty that all will know how to work and serve the cause in a harmony of effort, which would overcome any particularism, and annul every uncertainty in the name of the Duce and the love of the Nation." Whereupon, "the Chief of the Government, amidst the moved and quivering attentions of his comrades, replied with a few vibrating words inciting to an always more living concord of souls and deeds in the constant thought of working, not for oneself, but for Italy." The last words of the Duce, concludes the terse record, "were interrupted by a quivering cry of devotion and passion."[1]

At first this Council was simply the Directorate of the Party, together with some distinguished Party leaders outside. From January 1923, when it was first convened by Mussolini in his private apartment in the Grand Hotel in Rome, to May 1928, it was simply an organ of the Fascist Party, concerned, naturally, with State policy much as to-day, but even more concerned with the day-by-day problems of securing that the Party should dominate the various institutions of the State, win the elections local and central, and purify itself of the ruffians who had helped it into power and almost caused its collapse in 1924 and 1925. Mussolini probably had more power over it then (if he had liked to claim that power) than he has over it now; it was his private Council; he appointed its members in absolute freedom, for the constitution was as yet formless and vague, and in a time of insurrection the Chief is allowed more latitude, for strategical reasons, than when the victors enter the piping times of peace and legality. Then the Council turned to the reconstruction of the State, appointed a Commission on the Constitution, drafted the laws arising out of its proposals, and having done this, turned its gaze upon

[1] *Il Gran Consiglio Nei Primi Dieci Anni*, pp. 316, 317.

itself and the Party. The Party was first given an elaborate well-articulated constitution in 1926; and this required as a corollary the settlement of the final relationship between the Grand Council as a liaison between the State and the Directorate of the Party, which, while having mainly Party affairs to consider and command, would have permanent connections with the Council. Already, in the constitution of the Party of October 1926, the Grand Council was recognised as the "supreme organ of Fascism," with the duty of "fixing the lines of action which the Party must realise in all the fields of life of the Nation." It was still a purely Party organ in its mode of composition and formal character. Early in 1928, its transformation into the central Chamber of the State was decided upon: "The Grand Council considers the moment arrived when its constitution, its functioning and its position among the other constitutional organs of the State should be regulated by law." Hence, in 1928, after a fairly long period of discussion in the Council itself, the law we have analysed was proposed and passed. It is of great interest to observe how little difference there is between the project of the law and its character after it had passed through both Chambers.

Hence the Duce of Fascism is Prime Minister, Head of the Cabinet, Minister of the Parliament, the President of the Corporative Associations and Assemblies, the direct controller of the local authorities, the controller of the Grand Council of Fascism, and the leader of the Fascist Party—

a massy wheel,
Fixed on the summit of the highest mount,
To whose huge spokes ten thousand lesser things
Are mortised and adjoined . . .

What are the qualities of the "massy wheel," to stand the stress and strain, and give the impulses to a whole State?

Genius for Government. Mussolini's capacity for government is of that especially high creative order which we call genius: it is original, sustained, and apt.

Part V

The Manufacture of Obedience

Chapter X

MUSSOLINI AS A DICTATOR

Mussolini would not possess the State if he could not possess the Party, and he would lose the Party if, possessing the State, he governed it incompetently. The leadership of the Party and the management of the State are indissolubly connected. Mussolini himself continually reiterates that his own prepotency is the keystone of the all-including arch of Fascist empire. Weaker men might play the demagogue's trick of pretending that the services rendered, and the responsibilities borne, were to be credited to others. Not so Mussolini. He has set himself in a high place; he is, indeed, indispensable to the Fascist Olympus; and he exults in the thought. He has said (Grand Report of Fascism, Sept. 14th, 1929):

"My words, as always in the last twenty years of political battles, of which ten of Fascist battles, come after the facts, which do not draw their origin from assemblies, nor from previous councils or inspirations of individuals, groups or circles: they are decisions which I alone mature, of which, as is proper, no one can have previous knowledge, not even those interested who may be pleasantly surprised even when they leave the place. Only one person is informed at the proper time, the Head of the State, His Majesty the King. Although it seems superfluous, after the experience of seven years, I yet repeat that I hold this reserve to be absolutely necessary, and, in any case, it belongs to what people have come to call my style of government to which I naturally intend to remain faithful. From this you can naturally deduce what credit is owed to the so-called 'official spokesmen' composed for the most part of deluded people, failures and imbeciles."

We have so far analysed Mussolini's qualities only as the leader of an insurrection; but now we must sort out his talents

as a ruler, and that in a State which proposes as its purpose not merely order, but progress (of the Fascist sort), and, not the least difficult, seeks to instil in old and young a new civic religion.

What are his personal resources? What forces give him the primacy among Italians? Why do people obey him? As we describe them we must remember that each quality has two constituents, not always of equal effectiveness, but yet always combined: one assuring the *management* of men, and the other securing their loyalty and obedience.

Knowledge of Human Nature. First, then, Mussolini has a profound knowledge of men, the richness and poverty of their character, and their individual and collective responses to the whole gamut of influences. Men are to Mussolini like those clocks whose works are cased in glass in order that they can be seen. His penetration is extremely subtle: "refined," as the Continental idiom has it. This does not apply to one special section of the people, like the peasantry, among whom he was born, but to all. This comes, in part, from extensive movement and contacts; but this does not account for his knowledge, or limit it. Some people are saturated with the knowledge of mankind; they seem to have a perceptive ability in addition to the usual senses. It is an absolutely infallible and subtle prescience that formulates itself immediately a person is confronted, as though all the secrets emerged and steadily developed themselves on a highly sensitised plate. All those who are acquainted with Mussolini agree that he has this power. I am anxious to urge that this knowledge is not mere intellectual recognition, but emotional sympathy as well. Mere intellectual recognition does not of itself suggest the useful approach to the person to be governed. It is not self-charged, as emotional sympathy is, with the proper response, nor has it the power in it to move the other person.

Now Mussolini has this instinct of the appropriate response; he can sense and respond to atmosphere, the dimensions and the perspective of history, the traditions, the self-respect of individuals or assemblies, their present temper, and the pleasures

and pains which they acknowledge as master.[1] The Senate, whose seats are filled by the grey-bearded " personages," is addressed with the gravity of an elder statesman; the Chamber with tempestuous fervour, and " high inspiration " and humour. The peasants he salutes in the style of a peasant, harsh, dour, and as the journalists say " honest " ; and it must be admitted that he speaks with the accents of a scourge, rather than in the mellifluent tones of a magician, proclaiming, because he appreciates, the god-like qualities of his sweaty audience, and offering them infinite gain if they continue to obey. He does not promise them that the State will make their fortunes, but that, if they work, the State will do what it can to help them. He tells them not to expect wonders from him, but to be stoical; and yet there is a heart-to-heart, peasant-to-peasant meeting-on-the-road warmth of comradeship, which is the expression of genuine sympathy and goodwill. Yet the discourse would not be complete without homely examples, and figures of speech, and not a little of what is vulgarly called the confidence trick. The peasants, I think, do not show displeasure when they refer to him as *un furbo*, " a crafty fellow." He is, indeed, very, very astute. A Senator, not a passionate friend of the Duce, speaking to me of the Macdonald meeting of 1933, emphasised the astuteness, the real Italian subtle, medieval, half-Jewish astuteness. He mingles with his soldiers at manœuvres, and sings songs for them. He goes into the fields, does a morning's work bringing in the harvest, and draws his two shillings pay. He takes off his coat and shows the " pull-o-fer " he is wearing. When the young men come to visit him to receive their prizes for Fascist literary or athletic competitions, he is seen from afar riding round the grounds of his villa; he gives an entirely impromptu display of fine horsemanship, and draws up with a rush, a curvet, and a strong hand on the bit, directly in front of the group. When reductions of salaries are causing the whole country to murmur, he demonstrates the fall in the cost of living, by sending a personal servant out for meat and bread, and having a meal made of this, and then he tells the country :

[1] This very faculty is possibly destructive of integrity, the man is so influenced by his immediate environment that he tends to say the things that will satisfy. These are not necessarily the truth. This, in my opinion, accounts for many of Mussolini's inconsistencies and hollow boasts.

"I saw in the newspapers (I am an assiduous reader of newspapers) that one can get bread at 4¼*d.* a kilo.[1] I sent for one of my guards, the least known and the most ingenuous, and I said to him, 'For midday to-day I want a kilo of bread at 4¼*d.*, and bring me a kilo of soup-meat of the kind which costs 1*s.* 3½*d.* per kilo.' At lunch-time there was on my table the bread which I found excellent, and the meat with which I would not say you can make a sublime soup, but one which I think we can call good enough."

The buildings now surrounding the tomb of Augustus are to be pulled down. Mussolini, with coat thrown off and pull-over showing, seizes a pick, and commences on the first house. Then says the reporter of the *Corriere della Sera*[2]:

"The demolitions around the Mausoleum of Augustus were begun with a characteristic action. The Duce was the first to wield the pick against the stones of a crumbling wall and made them fall down into the street, amidst the universal joy of the workers and people who looked on at a spectacle by no means common. Thus, the grandiose undertaking, which will give back to the light of day the venerable remains of the tomb of the first Emperor, begins with a rite of a new kind; a civil rite, characterised by power and forthrightness; the rite of labour which attunes once more the great artificer of the new destinies of Italy with the anonymous crowd of workers.

"Think, in what other country would a similar thing be possible? Try to imagine certain solemn and bearded political personages in the act of demolishing the corner stone of a roof at the height of the fifth floor, with the sure and rhythmic blows of a proved bricklayer. You cannot find one, probably, whose image would not make one laugh when associated with the idea of such labour, fatiguing and perilous, and, in any case, not reconcilable with the traditional set countenances of constituted authorities in the so-called democratic régimes. In other countries statesmen do not take part in such ceremonies; at the most they are content to turn out a few grains of mortar with a golden trowel, around the first stone of a building to be constructed; an easy operation and of no particular significance, to which no one attaches more importance than that which it really possesses, just routine."

In other words, he combines with his knowledge the ability to devise and produce effects.

[1] These were the lowest prices in Rome of the worst qualities. May 1934.

[2] October 23rd, 1934.

Histrionic Ability. He is the successful artist a dictatorial system dependent on acclamation demands. He has never cherished the intention of retiring to secret groves from which to exercise his wizardry. Not for him the myth that will grow out of invisibility. "People have only talked of this. For my part I renounce it, because a myth cannot be imposed and I reject all anticipated retirements. The most alive of all among live men, as are the Italian Fascists, I do not intend to be too soon shunted off in the sidings of inaccessible myths."[1]

He long ago saw that democracy languished because it was "grey, mediocre, levelled"; and he learnt the value of brilliance.

"Fascism brings back 'style' to the life of the people: that is a line of conduct, colour, force, the picturesque, the unexpected, the mystic; in other words all that counts in the mind of the multitudes" (October 4th, 1922).

Government by Acclamation. In all systems of government based, not on the open competition of reasoning minds, but on the acclamation of the crowd, it is necessary that there shall be many crowds not too large to see and hear the Dictator, and many opportunities of acclamation. The echoes of one burst of acclamation must not have died away before the first murmurs of another are conjured from the lips of the vibrant crowd.

Thus it is not merely in knowledge, or even emotional sympathy, that governmental genius resides, but in a *special combination of all* the practices needed to win and hold a people. Part of this body of qualities is to understand what tactics will win each group. And in Italy, particularly, to provide a regular entertainment, an incessant round of excitement: trumpets must blare and drums roll; banners must be blessed and carried in processions, for the Italians of all people are an operatic, a colourful and colour-loving people. Their floury diet demands a piquant sauce. Sheer artistry itself, artistry of bearing, action, style, win Mussolini applause, support, and thence obedience. The people vibrate in unison with him, in much the same way as they do with the tenor singing *La Donna è Mobile* or *Un dì nell' azzurro spazio*, as a spectacle and a voice of the kind their nature and culture find pleasing. And when

[1] Gutkind, *Mussolini e il suo Fascismo*, p. 32.

they go home after the performance, there is still some rapture left, though much of the intensity and approval has evaporated. Mussolini must, then, be always on the stage, in new rôles, to stay the evaporation. The critical test of his audience would come if he demanded a really high price of admission; let us say, a war. Certainly no one near him now can equal him for his personal successes, though his friend, Filippo Corridoni, who was killed in the trenches, was his superior. In the apt American phrase, Mussolini is a spell-binder. The quality would bring ridicule on him in England; not, of course, that such emotional needs are entirely unknown to the English, but peoples differ in the degree of their craving for such æsthetic exhibitions. All nations are human, but their specific proportions of the various qualities individuate them. There are few puritans in Italy, though there might be more ascetics than in England; and few such warm-hearted, convivial, natural members of a crowd in England, though the Englishman is more constant and capable of steady co-operation. The Italian is communicative, and craves communication; the Englishman is reticent, and seeks withdrawal from human contacts. Italians love a display of emotion, to an extent the English would regard as disgusting, especially in public. Hence, the task of government has been, is, and always will be, different in Italy from in England.

Yet Mussolini is more controlled, more disposed to reticence, less expansive than the average Italian. He is imperious and detached. He gesticulates less. He has a solid crag-like passivity when listening, and even when speaking, that is particularly imposing in a land where all are volatile and throbbing. He gives the impression that confidence will be well placed in him, and power turned to good uses. . . . It is this un-Italian steadiness which marks him off from the rest; he is un-ordinary, and that already seems to the average man an infallible sign of superiority. People are not able to be much different from what they are, even if they try; but they are the more attracted by those who differ from them in the traits they envy.

Wide Range of Knowledge. Another quality that distinguishes the dictatorship of Mussolini is his exceptionally wide knowledge of science and philosophy. Now the Fascist Party

has sponsored too many ridiculous advertisements of his omniscience ; this is a clever tactic for the peasantry (especially in a country but lately emerged from illiteracy), when it is not the unintended self-deception or hysterical rhapsody of the journalist himself. Yet, if it is not necessary to know everything to be a good governor, it is essential to know at least enough along the whole line of state policy to sense when information is needed. However short of omniscience this requirement may be, it is a formidable condition, and Mussolini fulfils it very well. We have already spoken of his early studies ; those studies have never ceased even in the midst of revolution ; and they still continue amid the heaving seas of everyday affairs. He reads assiduously, with a wider range than a professor, and certainly with more concentration ; for practical success depends on it, not merely the easy success of a plausible generalisation, or a caustic stroke at rivals designed to raise a laugh in a class of undergraduates. The mistakes of the statesmen are more punishing than failure at a university examination or the benevolent criticism of academic colleagues. I suppose no statesman since Gladstone has read so hard as Mussolini. I will not accept the rumours that Mussolini is a great statistician, though he commends the value of statistics and their impartial charting of the ways of social life to his people. He could not define a quartile or a mean deviation, but he understands the instrumental value of statistical analysis to the pilot of society. And he knows that there is enough rivalry among statisticians to correct each other's bias. These remarks are true also of the solemn assurances of my friends that he is " a great economist." He is nothing of the sort. But he has the ability to realise when to be suspicious of experts, when the situation requires him to seek advice, and to win to his assistance all the technical collaborators he needs. Now there are some people too vain to seek advice ; Mussolini seeks it wherever it may be found, and therefore fulfils Richelieu's condition of wisdom and character in a statesman.

Suddenly, this or that professor or Minister or industrial expert will receive a newspaper or a learned journal from him, marked here and there with a blue pencil, meaning, " Tell me, what do you think of this ? " Experts who differ are called to an audience together, and the points in dispute are debated while

Mussolini looks on and participates, and draws conclusions. He seeks the truth ; and the worse the tidings, the harder it pours, the more fortitude and patience does he show. " Who tells me true, though in his tale lie death, I hear him as he flattered." That is Mussolini's admonition also : " The truth which you must always tell me, in every case, especially when it is displeasing, because silence will impede my hurrying in time to repair the trouble," (1929). There is another incidental, but by no means negligible, consequence of this wide reading : men who write striking books or articles get immediate access to the supreme selector of the governing class, and dangerous heretics, even tucked away in the provinces, as he was once tucked away, do not remain hidden till they grow too great for destruction.

He assimilates new facts and endows them with meaning and relevance with remarkable rapidity. Some tell me that this is the product of long journalistic practice, but a natural talent must have been there from the beginning. He is the world's most accomplished plagiarist.

Disinterestedness. Thirdly, Mussolini has, and gives the impression of having, a complete contempt for material rewards, money, comfort, position. Our account of his early life has already shown this ; his mentors, like Nietzsche, taught him to despise the petty satisfactions and idle luxuries for which men barter the nobler opportunities. Material asceticism and spiritual pride are frequent companions. " We must arrive naked at our goal," he says. The necessary condition of arrival is, indeed, the renunciation of all things which, satisfying the appetites, are obstacles to the splendid purpose. Now poor people keenly enjoy speeches in contempt of wealth, as they seem to be open insults to the wealthy (which they only dare mutter). Further, the poor are always suspicious that the men who declare that they are servants of the public, whether as politicians or charity organisers, intend, in fact, only to enrich themselves. Mussolini gets the benefit of both these popular tendencies, for he genuinely despises gain and a life lived for its accumulation. The Italians have always been accustomed to penury, for theirs is a land of pitifully small resources ; and they are surrounded and permeated by the example of the great ascetics of the Catholic

Church. Rich men cannot enter into heaven; holy men were always poor men; and poor men may be Saints. Mussolini comes from poverty, preaches poverty, and remains poor.[1] Yes; his devotion to Italy, and only Italy, is as unmistakable as it is absolute. He lives most abstemiously. And the spectacle of devotion arouses devotion in others for the devotee and the object of his adoration. Every teacher, every director of a business, every political leader, knows that if he believes single-mindedly, and serves with self-abnegation, others will come to believe that there is something essentially good in his purpose. "If ye believe on me, ye shall be saved." It has meaning, and it is worth living for. It seems to offer a convincing and thrilling answer to disturbing questions of value, questions which are not coherently formulable by the simple people, but none the less trouble the heart and torment the conscience, and keep us in a state of anxious yearning for a gospel. And the answer which the son of the Romagnol peasant has found, transfigures and exalts him; it moves and convulses his face and his limbs, and gives him literary style. "When the blood burns, how prodigal the soul lends the tongue vows." Another consequence of this sacrifice of self to Italy is the exclusion of ties of friendship, when these would mean keeping in office men whose usefulness to Italy was exhausted. There must be no personal loyalties, no promises, no doctrinal consistency, nor anything else that conflicts with the destiny of a greater Italy. There are some men who cannot desert the friends of yesterday for the sake of their country. Mussolini is not one of these. *Yet though he has eschewed money, Mussolini has not forsworn that other and more potent corruption: autocratic power. It is yet to be proved that the commonwealth of Italy is not sacrificed to this craving.* But he denies this. "Is it a lust for power that possesses me? No, I believe, in conscience, that no Italian thinks this. Not even my worst adversary. It is duty. A precise duty towards the Revolution and towards Italy." And that cry to the Assembly after the March, that he hoped *God* would help him to carry out his task. Was this excitement or conscience?

Will. He is moved by an extraordinary combination of

[1] Though it seems to me that his family are doing very well. I suppose the *Popolo d'Italia* is theirs, and it is not the newspaperette it was at the beginning.

self-confidence, decision and will. To the outer world at least, whatever private qualms and anxiety he may feel, Mussolini is illimitably certain of the rightness of his own ultimate judgement. No qualification is admitted when all the discussion he initiated has ceased, and once this is settled, action follows simply and inflexibly. He is certain of his star, certain that he cannot be assassinated until his work is accomplished, certain that Italy needs him, certain that his institutions are wholesome for Italy and the world, certain that he cannot fail. " It is clear that every great movement must have a representative man who suffers all the passion and carries all the flame of that movement." " Enthusiasm is a primitive and fundamental force of the human spirit. Nothing great can be accomplished except by those who are in a state of amorous passion, in a state of religious mysticism. But that is not enough. Together with sentiment, there are the reasoning forces of the brain." Yet the indomitability of his will is not a blind stubbornness. He is tractable and reasonable, and follows the facts to reach a decision, and then follows them onwards from his decision, ready to modify the decisions if the results are not what he willed.

His courage, now that he has a régime behind him and no foes in front, is always heroic. At the very least he has histrionic courage, and the courage of desperate men who have got into a situation which only a show of courage and efforts of self-preservation can save. A few hours after the attempt on his life by Miss Gibson he concluded his address to the Directorate of the Party with, " Not for nothing have I chosen for my motto in life : ' Live dangerously,' and I say to you, like the old warrior : ' If I advance, follow me ; if I retreat, kill me ; if I die, avenge me!' " This type of courage and decision and the words that go with them—as Carlyle said of Napoleon, " he has words like Battles of Austerlitz "—galvanises other people. Doubts which " give pause," and suspend the uncertain between equally attractive or unattractive courses, are willingly deserted once the dilemma is settled by an active initiator, and men drop into the wake of his movement and are drawn along because they have not an equal and opposite self-confidence. The first tendency of most people is to accept a decision ; it requires time to recollect the thoughts and hopes that have been thrown out of order

by the bombshell. Quite certainly, to follow is easier than to resist, if it is not positively painful. The initiator has a great advantage.

Mussolini also possesses the will to overcome consequential obstacles. For those who lead, it is not enough to wish ; to will is more. To will is to accept the obligations and sacrifices and to render all the efforts imposed by the commands of the will. Mussolini's passionate, intense, will has also the propensity that it challenges a declaration of complete friendship or complete hostility ; there is no room left for, and he will not tolerate, lukewarm detachment. He imposes a choice between acceptance or negation, and so knows exactly where he is ; the conditional is reduced to its smallest margin, compatible with the ineradicable differences among men, and the impossibility of ruling out mental reservations. These two qualities, self-confidence and intensity of will, exist in him not in any ordinary degree, or even in such degree as is found in abnormal men. In him they are volcanic, earth-shaking. It is as though a tempest of resentment against the Universe itself were bursting in him. The occasional quotations given must have amply shown this.

Personal contact reveals it clearly and immediately. There he sits like a force of Nature ! there are storms of cyclopean violence, and then just as silent, withdrawn, brooding, the patient and confident waiting of Nature on the way to bring forth her creations in due and inevitable season, or, again, the tense flexing of all the muscles and the bracing of the spirit preparatory to a spring at the mark. This intensity of being, prodigious and almost possessed, exerts a most potent influence throughout the country. The impact of his personality on men, women and children far from the vicinity of Mussolini's physical presence is astounding. Far away, even to uttermost confines of the kingdom, beyond the hills, and fields, and marshes, separating them from Rome, even beyond the ocean, the charm works. A business-like Party official, hearing that I was to visit the Duce, exclaimed, enraptured, " Oh, thou in beautitude ! " Here is another, who apes the manners and gestures of the Duce, and goes about muttering his phrases, re-enacting decisive scenes from his life, pouting his lips, and thrusting forward his jaw. The little children salute in the Roman fashion. Peasants and workers raise their

arms with more than the reverence paid to Holy Mary as she is carried in procession, for they are stirred by mysteries and almighty powers yonder, far away in Eternal Rome, under the stewardship of a dark peasant and worker, Mussolini. One of Napoleon's officials says, " I worked from morning until night with a singular ardour ; I astonished the natives thereby who did not know that the Emperor exercised upon his servants, however far away they were from him, the *miracle of the real presence* ; I believed I saw him in front of me, when I was at work shut in my study." Mussolini has this power of *performing the miracle of the real presence.*

Industry. Devotion to duty and intense will are allied in Mussolini, as they always must be if they are to be converted into accomplishment, with a power of steady hard work, and the capacity to organise and direct a routine of government which promotes the fullest exploitation of every moment of time. Like Napoleon, but perhaps not so intensely or continuously, he can work an abnormally long day, but it is not in hours only that such work is calculated, but in concentration. Mussolini has made this, in fact, an example to the rest of a nation, which has not the steady energy of the English, nor the intense, if sometimes wasteful, energy of the American, nor the exacting *Pflichtgefühl* of the Germans, a nation in which regularity and punctuality have in the past not been religiously respected. He said at the Quinquennial Assembly of 1929 :

" Now do not believe that I wish to commit a sin of immodesty in saying that all this work of which I have given you a sparing and very slight account has been activated by my mind. The work of legislation, of preparation, of control and creation of new institutions has only been a part of my work. There is another not so much known, but the nature of which is described by these figures which may interest you : I have given over 60,000 audiences[1] ; I have interested myself in 1,887,112 affairs of citizens, coming directly to my private secretaries. Every time that individual citizens, even from the most remote villages, have applied to me, they have received a reply. It is not enough to govern firmly ; it is necessary that the

[1] In seven years ? This would mean about 8,500 a year, or an average of over 24 a day at 350 days in the year. This is remarkable if we do not forget all the other activities : Grand Council ; Cabinet ; Party meetings ; Parliament, and the rest !

people, even the distant, humble, forgotten, shall have proof that the Government is composed of men who understand and help and do not feel aloof from the rest of mankind. To regulate their effort, I have geared my motor to a system ; I have rationalised my daily work ; I have reduced to the minimum every possible misapplication of time and energy and have adopted this principle, which I recommend to all Italians : the work of the day must be methodically but regularly dispatched in the day. No arrears. Routine work must revolve with an almost mechanical automatism."

The daily labours are herculean : reports for examination and comment ; decisions to be declared ; Ministers to consult and command ; audiences to Italians and foreigners ; public functions ; frequent visits and speeches to all parts of the country ; study and meditation ; uncountable problems of personnel to unravel, since he is the almost universal court of appeal even for relatively unimportant disputes between members of the Party. But he is relieved from attendance at Parliamentary sessions as long and arduous as those in democratic countries. This extraordinary laborious life is founded upon the robust vitality and physique of a burly, broad-shouldered, deep-chested, rather short, well-knit athletic person.

Personal Fascination. To all these characteristics Mussolini unites personal fascination. It is as impossible to define this, or explain its origin, as to explain why we like or love others, why we are attracted by some who do not care a rap for us or repelled by others whose intentions towards us are eternally kind. But the effects are evident, and well-attested by those whose personal relationship with Mussolini has been long and continuous.

His presence is exciting, disturbing, and, finally, commanding. People feel simply that they must obey. Command, or persuasion, or whatever he desires, lies in the quality of his looks, his voice, his demeanour—and something more that is not distinguishable enough for analysis. As Gorki says of Tolstoy :

" He always aroused in me sensations and agitations which were enormous, fantastic ; even the unpleasant and hostile feelings which he aroused were of a kind not to oppress, but rather to explode the soul ; they made it more sensitive and capacious."

Now this is fundamental to an enduring dictatorship. For the outer trappings of greatness can be never so well supplied as in contemporary societies by propaganda. But the vestments, the *papier-mâche* masks, the luridly coloured scenery, the hypnotising lights, the synthetic substitutes for true majesty, cannot win and hold the ten score of men who are at the summit of the hierarchy, holding and pulling the wires which move the faithful thousands of the rank and file. His predominance over millions may to-day be manufactured out of well-known base substances (and the baser, the more effective), but even this cannot be achieved unless there is a genuine direct supremacy of the leader over the few surrounding collaborators who know him personally. No man is a hero to his valet, unless, indeed, he is really a hero; and then the valet's evidence is of special importance. Personal fascination needs, then, to be exercised directly on a few men, five, ten, twenty, themselves of outstanding intellect and personality. This fascinated group will attract and hold others by diffusing the leader's own reputation. And so the hypnotising process extends in ever-increasing circles, until the loyalty of a whole nation is won, one knows not whether by virtue of the personal attributes of the petty leaders in each little locality in the name of the national leader, or his own power in direct radiation. He makes the smaller men; his glamour shines on them and makes them greater than nature; their attachment to him adds to his force of attraction. As Stendhal says in *De l'Amour*, "Before the birth of love, beauty is necessary as an *advertisement*; it predisposes one to this passion by the praise one hears given to the person one loves. Very warm admiration consolidates even the faintest hope . . . a woman in taking a lover takes more account of the opinions that other women have of him than the opinion she has of him herself. Hence the success of Princes and Army Officers."

Personal supremacy, in which the ingredient of fascination plays a considerable part, begins the whole process; and a genuine nucleus always remains an essential requisite of power. This fascination may diminish and still be of service, for accumulated prestige counterbalances its attrition. But its complete evaporation would soon be followed by the downfall of the dictator. Now Mussolini's personal fascination is accompanied

by a sense of distance between him and his followers. In Italy, I have heard this expressed in the remark that no one ever attempted to slap Mussolini on the back as a sign of good fellowship. He is not a "good fellow." While he is not sullen, he is withdrawn. He is not a handshaker. Hence the impulse to substitute the Roman salute with the reason that "it is more hygienic, more tasteful, and wastes less time." But reserve and distance have a curiously attractive power over those who are passed by, almost slighted. They crave to be noticed ; and in this craving they surrender something of their own personality.

Here is the testimony of a young Italian journalist, who was present at the meeting in March 1919.

"His clear statements interpret marvellously our wish for new Italians, seared with an ardent national passion. There is in us an ineffable felicity which we try in vain to express with applause. We want to do more and better to make Mussolini understand that we want to obey him to the death, and that we want nothing from him excepting orders and commands which will placate our uneasiness and disquiet. . . . We are glad to have found a leader (*capo*), the leader who is needed. . . . If God wills, we now have a line of conduct, a programme to carry out, an itinerary to follow. And, above all, a chief, to obey whom is even restful, so much confidence does his absolute superiority inspire above others. We feel that he is the first, the best, the most worthy to command us. . . . He is the tribune, the victor, the chief. Clear ideas, easy flow of language, an accentuated faculty of suggestion. . . . And he is, in the highest significance of the word, a prophet, with that preaching, that infatuation which captures us all, with the certainty which lightens in his eyes, that he succeeds in injecting into our metropolitan scepticism, into our tired and deluded souls. . . . We feel ourselves invaded by a puerile joy, by a simple contentment, by a natural and spontaneous satisfaction. We are but a few against many, but we have as a chief a leader who makes even his opponents gape. We will win, we will advance, we shall assert our faith."[1]

Gentile, the philosopher, and first Minister of Education under Mussolini, and since then member of the Grand Council of Fascism, and generally one of the personages of the régime, explains his belief in Mussolini thus :

"But the major contribution of the personality of Mussolini to the ideas which he represents, is the great moral force which emanates

[1] Dacquanno, *Vecchia Guardia.*

from him, his prestige, his fascination which he exercises on the individuals who meet him, and the masses to whom he speaks in meetings of many thousands of persons, who had never before been seen crowding together excitedly to listen to an orator. Moral force, which springs from the absolute faith which he, before all, has in his own ideas and the providential mission which he is destined to fulfil for his country, and the great humanity of his soul, closed to every individual interest and only open to the vast generous sentiment of those ideal goods which transcend the individual and concern the Fatherland in its honour, its glory, in its security and prosperity, and, therefore, in its power and its value in the history of the world. A vast feeling, which is echoed in his forthright, nude and powerful eloquence, which reaches the minds of the listeners as the immediate expression of that which they have in the deepest depth always felt without thinking about, without forming a clear concept, and without therefore knowing how to say it to themselves clearly " (*Corriere della Sera*, May 15th, 1934).

A young Party official, personally known to me, already arrived quite high in the hierarchy, and destined, I think, to go much further, says this :

" Mussolini is not only like the hero envisaged by Carlyle, a ' missionary of order,' but, above all, an exciter of life, a leader to glory, a man who knew how to take the Nation, make it confront itself, make it participate in a passionate faith, interpreter of the aspirations and the anxieties of the multitude. There is in him the sense of the real marvellously fused with the spiritual and historical necessities. He has fixed the directions of our destiny, has established the necessary tables of our law. . . . This man, whom divine Providence has called to the leadership of the Italian people, has passed through the torment of terrible experiences, through the fire of formidable passions. Thus, rich with a prodigious human sensibility, he has understood that not merely the forces of economic brutality, not physical laws alone, regulate the destiny of peoples."[1]

Bottai, one of the leaders of the March on Rome, and since then Minister of Corporations, editor of one of the most outspoken reviews in Italy, member of the Grand Council, and a leader of democratic-collectivism, now Governor of Rome, explains his loyalty (in part) as follows :

[1] Vincenzo Zangara, *Rivoluzione Sindacale* (3rd edn., p. 151).

"To know how to build (echoing the last words of a quotation from one of Mussolini's speeches) : *there* is a force which is possessed only by him who is capable of general ideas, who knows how to draw from concrete historic situations in which he finds himself acting, political ideas and political conceptions precise, clear, illuminating. That which is called, generally, original political talent, or a genius, reveals itself, of course, in cold, decided, timely action carried to the end, as it is said, to the ultimate consequences ; but it reveals itself also in the method by which it arises once again from the consequences to the first causes of action, to principles. There is in the political genius an energy which reunites the details in the whole, which puts fire into ideas, which describes the concordant direction of facts in appearance contradictory. The secret relationship and the subtle correspondences between the arts of a unique historical process are the real material of the craft of the great statesmen. A political style, an order, a constitution, the general character of an epoch and the law of a people, can be surmised and created only by him who has in a supreme degree the power of reducing to a system the disparate elements, and often, contrasting with his own action. 'Do you know,' asked Napoleon, already taught by experience, 'what I admire most in the world ? It is the powerlessness of force to organise anything.' A reply, we may say, which is perfectly Mussolinian."[1]

I have no doubt that Napoleon would have thanked Mussolini for putting the words into his mouth.

Finally, we must reproduce the dithyrambs of a rhapsodist, Ottavio Dinale, otherwise "Farinata" of the *Popolo d'Italia :*

"The voluptuary of risk. A passional of all for all, a resolute who wills to conquer. Impulsive to grasp the moment, patient in approaching it. He sees, he foresees, he senses, measures, acts, wills. He ripens all the interior and exterior processes, from which there cannot but bloom success. He tames fortune, masters destiny. He has dominated the most perilous situations, he has released the spark from nothing, has arrested and deviated the stream of history. He has created a people. He has aroused a Nation. He has organised a State, has fused a block of will, of hearts, of souls, of power.

"Everything takes breath and movement from Him, because it is He, the Hero.

"Head of the Government of a Nation to which He has given a totalitarian régime, which creates the power of the Fatherland, the security of the Nation, the sovereignty of the State.

"The exciter of energies and faiths.

[1] *Criteria Fascista*, p. 122, April 1st, 1934.

"The realiser, the moderator, the supreme arbiter.

"The centre and motive force of the national life, to whom all things and all people yield obedience, because He is the Condottiere, who has gathered to himself all the responsibility.

"His Italian miracle has passed the frontiers and the ocean.

"His name has a universal echo.

"His method is observed, imitated, hoped for, awaited.

"When He speaks to the Italians he speaks to the world.

"The Hero is ours. Italian. As Italian are the lions who nourish him with prodigious lymph, from which he acquires the heroic force. But He belongs already to all the peoples, because all peoples are invoking the saviour, in their intuition and in their instinct cannot invocate any but Him: MUSSOLINI."

And so on, literally, for 282 pages, demy octavo.[1]

The Myth of the Hero. All these gifts have won a crown for Mussolini; guarantee his omnipotence; render it as beneficial as a Dictatorship can be. But modern Dictators, once established, have the means of aggrandisement and perpetuation, which, invented by democracies, can not be used by them, unlimitedly, since, as we have pointed out, there are automatically inherent in that system checks and counter-checks to the spread of untruth. Whatever the splendour of a man, it may nowadays be made to outshine the most splendid of gods by the arts of advertisement.[2] Ordinary men, knowing nothing of these tricks, stage-craft, and public choreography, and being forbidden to comment on them if they do, are cheated into worshipping a man who is projected by a mask highly picturesque and extravagantly false. Mussolini enjoys to the full, and instigates, the uncriticised and uncritical propaganda on his behalf. All praise and no blame make Jack into a god. Nor is the propaganda directed to the aggrandisement of the Party or the régime, so much as to Mussolini personally. There is instinctive wisdom in such tactics. People might be inclined to scrutinise the seamy side of the system were its local agents and its local achievements belauded; they might be stimulated to criticism rather than

[1] *Tempo di Mussolini*, 1934, p. 11.

[2] In the long list of books and articles the Duce is compared with Cæsar, Napoleon, Garibaldi, Crispi, Scipio Africanus, St. Francis, Bismarck, Mazzini. The land is covered with pictures, tablets and busts of him idealised to bring out *qualities*, such as command, austerity, love for little children, etc.

faith. But the praise of the Man is different. He, it may be said, may have the best intentions (and that is difficult to disprove); but his intentions and commands, it may again be whispered, may work out badly, not because they are intrinsically unwise or impossible, but simply because these local Jacks-in-Office are not of his grandeur. That is all the more, not the less, reason for regarding the Duce with affection.

It is interesting, when it is not too nauseating, to observe how Mussolini fills the front page, the back page and the middle pages. "Audacity, audacity, and always audacity!" said Napoleon. The Fascist Government Press Bureau says, "Front page, back page, and all the rest!" When Balbo flies to Chicago and back in a perilous and epoch-making flight, the newspapers talk of "*The Wings of Mussolini* under the guidance of Balbo"; and then telegrams sent by the Duce to Balbo are published, to show that Mussolini had directed the flight almost day by day—and, that, indeed, without this guidance and moral support, the flight could hardly have been accomplished. Then Balbo is received with an embrace and kisses by Mussolini; he is made Air Marshal—and almost immediately after sent packing from Rome to the Governorship of Tripoli. The limelight must shine on Mussolini alone, the rest stand in the darker shadows; and, meeting a strong light, the eye becomes all the blinder to things outside it. Every day there are many examples of this exclusive focusing of attention. Success of this kind is not difficult to achieve in Italy.

Provincial-mindedness of Italians. I cannot over-emphasise the depth of Italian ignorance, especially rural ignorance, of political affairs. These people are provincial, even parochial, in a dark, primitive sense. Any bluff will impose on them, if it is outside their tiny, limited, blinkered experience.

If attention were not thus focused, and the figure of Mussolini not so picked out and elevated above all else however, it might occupy itself with the minor figures, and it is doubtful whether liberty would be surrendered for them. At any rate, all this superstructure of simulated greatness, added to real greatness, will last Mussolini long after he has passed his meridian, and the

decline of his native powers sets in. The awe-inspiring masks of the Medicine Man may even be effectively employed for a time to magnify the small brains and petty temper of an unworthy successor. Mussolini asks for an austere and grave style of living in the Fascist State; for a truce to the convivial exchange of windy superlatives—the "issi-issi-issimi" of Italian life. What does he think of the psychological effect of adulating the great Joss, which is essential to his régime? Is it for the ultimate good of the Italian nation? I think not: emphatically not.

The Courage of Responsibility? Lastly, in this list of Mussolini's faculties for government, is the resolution to bear the responsibility of final and almost completely exclusive decisions. During the negotiations with the Lateran there were many anxious moments, not least within the Party itself. Mussolini afterwards said: "And so I found myself confronting one of the responsibilities which make the veins and the pulses of a man tremble, and I could ask counsel of no one: only my conscience could point the path for me, through painful, long meditations." Average men flee from this isolation. They are too sensitive or weak to risk or bear the remorse of failure. It is not that a man will be chased from office when he fails, though that may happen; nor is it that he may be executed by his accusers, though Dictators have often suffered untimely deaths. The bitterness is to see the defeat of hopes; the waste of efforts; the insubstantiality of dreams; the unravelling of intricate weavings; and the travail is simply to *dare* to say the last word, when the last word means the freedom and happiness, and even the very lives, of other people. For in a Dictatorship there are concentrated and increased in one man the million disagreeable, shameful, and even murderous, decisions which all Governments are bound to make. In popular forms of government these are distributed among many governors, and even shared by an electorate which had broadly approved their policy. Does Mussolini sincerely love Italy? It is indeed difficult to make the separation between a craving for personal power to govern a country, and love for the country itself. If he does love Italy above his own power what anxieties this must involve! Like a parent's responsibility to its children, the issue is his *self*, and if he destroys the object

of his charge he destroys himself. He cannot escape the admonition of his own self-respect.

Modern statesmen have also become the caretakers of History. It is not that they have merely shaped and locked the history of the past into their own museums. But rather that they are determined to *make* the history of the Future ; they want to be read about like the figures they have read about. For example, Trotsky once commented on a colleague who took office, " What contemptible ambition—to abandon *his historic position* for a portfolio ! " And Lunacharsky says of Trotsky that he treasures " his historic rôle," ready to die even " to remain in the memory of mankind with the halo of a genuine revolutionary leader." And they have used history as free permission to do as they like, and as the exemption from the judgement of Ethics. Yet history itself exacts certain obligations from them, and sets them a standard which may make them smart in the silence of their palaces and villas when all the visitors and interviewers have left.

Or Absence of Humane Instincts? Now Bismarck once observed that a Catholic statesman has an easier task than a Protestant, for the former can seek absolution of the Church, and the Church will take charge of the burden of his conscience. Not so the Protestant. All the weight of damnation bears fully upon him. Only his own courage can give him relief. The God of Mussolini, so far as we are able to discover, is the " simple God of the peasant " he speaks of in his Essay. In 1904 he declared himself an out-and-out atheist[1]; he is now said to be very devout; he certainly is very superstitious. He seems to have made his peace without Catholic ministrations, though on visiting the Pope in 1931 he knelt and seemed to be lost in prayer in St. Peter's.[2] He therefore dares all by himself ; hence he is Dictator; for no one else could bear the burden of the sole responsibility. It certainly requires a strong stomach to remain unshaken by the long series of executions, " removals," " liquidations,"

[1] Essay, *L'Uomo e la divinità*, Lugano, 1904.

[2] A few months ago, reflecting on Mussolini's ideas of the State, I wondered why the Catholic Church had not put his works on the *Index* ; a little while ago the Church did this with the works of Gentile, and as these include his writings on the Fascist Revolution and Doctrine, it seems to me impossible to avoid the deduction that Mussolini is, in spirit, equally on the *Index*. What subtlety, if it were meant ? But what Catholics know the doctrines of Fascism well enough to have remarked the condemnation, implicit if not directly rejected ?

murders, beatings, imprisonments, exilings, sequestrations of property, parting of husbands, wives and children. A Dictatorship is founded on the responsibility for filling a Chamber of Horrors. The Amendolas and Matteottis are only the more sensational affairs ; there are scores and scores of other exhibits. Whether the ultimate springs are in a conscious daring, that is a victory over the pangs of conscience, or in the remote cold indifference to " the material " of an artist, or the victim of an adventurer, no one can ever discover.

In thus analysing the sources of Mussolini's dictatorial power, I have, perhaps owing to the inherent nature of analysis, extracted the life and movement from it. All the qualities are, of course, combined, harmonised, and collaborative. What tells is their respective intensity and magnitude, interlocking and acting like a battery. This composes a man's constitution, physical and spiritual ; and, in this case, the man's constitution is the constitution of Italy. His essential flame is a religion at white heat, and its instrument abnormal practical ability.

Chapter XI

THE FASCIST PARTY: DEVELOPMENT

Examination of the institutions of the Fascist State clearly shows that their significance altogether depends on the omnipresence of the Fascist Party. The virtue of the State inheres in a nucleus of men and women ever prepared to propagate the ideas and will of the Leader, to obey his commands as divine law, and, in the last resort, to risk their lives in street fighting.

The Party now consists of 1,800,000 adults, of whom over 400,000 are enrolled in the Militia, a voluntary army with military training, bound to serve with arms at the outbreak of any attempt against the public security, that is, against the Fascist political fabric. There are ancillary and preparatory organisations such as the Balilla, the Avanguardisti, the Dopolavoro, containing millions more whose nature both as preparation for recruitment to the Party, and as agencies of culture and recreation, are examined later. We must now enquire into the history, nature and construction of the Party.

It is possible to trace four stages in its development : from the end of the War until October 1921 ; from then until the Matteotti affair in 1924 ; from the aftermath of the Matteotti affair until 1928 ; from the making of the Constitution of the Party in 1929 to the present.

1919–1921. Little need be added to the account already given of the rise of the Fascist movement and its progress to the date of its organisation as a Party with a written constitution in November 1921. Its essential characteristics then were its rabid antipathy to other Parties and the Liberal State ; its refusal to count itself as a Party, and its preference to be known as " anti-party " ; its insistence that it was a " movement " ;

its deliberate repudiation of a programme, side by side with the practical collection of the pieces of an ill-assorted suite; and the fairly spontaneous rise of local groups who democratically chose and criticised their own leaders, these local groups then freely federating as and when they deemed it desirable.

1921–1924. The second period itself falls into two stages, first to the March on Rome, and thence to the Matteotti affair. The whole period is marked by the growing victory of the Leader and his own nominees over the principle of local election. In the year prior to the March on Rome the principle of regional federation and common action and manœuvres was put into force. The general Constitution under which they were then acting was made at the Party Congress in November 1921. We have already described the spirit of the change from "movement" to "Party"; but it will not be a waste of time to glance at the practical arrangements. The Preamble merits entire reproduction since it is a keynote which has remained, unchanged through many vicissitudes, since it was first struck.

"The National Fascist Party is a Voluntary Militia placed at the service of the Nation. The prosecution of its activity is based upon these three principles: order, discipline, hierarchy."

This is as much a rebuke to certain "ambiguous elements" in the Party (as Mussolini called them), as a doctrine concerning the government of the country. The militant-cum-religious spirit of the declaration is worth remembering.

A Democratic Party seeks an Autocratic State. Now the chief organ of the Party was the National Council. This body was selected by the Central Committee from among its own members. The Central Committee was elected by the National Congress at its biennial meetings. The latter issued from election by the rank and file. The Central Committee wielded the powers delegated to it by the Congress. The principle of election and delegation could hardly be more explicit. Among the many powers included in the general delegation of powers by the

Congress to the Committee were the taking of all necessary disciplinary measures against its own members and dependent organisations, while its several members were endowed with powers to link up and supervise the provincial federations of their respective regions. Next, there was a small Directorate of the Party, elected by the National Congress. This body sat in the Central Committee. Its duty was to invigilate the working of the whole Party organisation, and enforce the strict observation of the political course laid down in general terms by the National Congress, and in particular application by the Central Committee. The Directorate had a power of taking urgent decisions as contingencies arose, but it was obliged to convene the Central Committee to ratify them. This small group of leaders, obviously the moving and deciding force, and (behind the scenes) the master of the National Congress, naturally administered the finances and property of the Party, and nominated the Secretary-General for appointment by the Central Committee.

In the localities there were (*a*) sessions (of 20 members) as the units or organising bodies; (*b*) groups of members with professional and technical skill, and (*c*) the fighting groups, *squadre di combattimento*. The leaders were elected by the groups, but they were formally subject to the approval of the central authority, the general inspectorate, and the Secretary-General. Conditions in a nascent tentative insurrectionary organisation did not always permit of *actual* approval. For instance, although there was a direct prohibition of *squadre* independent of the sessions, many existed and could only be brought under control some considerable time after the victory of October 1922. Some sessions quarrelled with other sessions; squads with sessions; and squads with squads. They disputed honours, jobs, doctrines, and this was to leave a serious heritage of controversy for the future. Provincial federations were constituted by the various sessions, and the latter were supposed to pay contributions for the support of the former. The Provincial Congresses elected the Provincial Committee and Secretary. Their business was then to supervise the action of all the sessions in the area, and the use of their disciplinary powers. The Provincial Secretary was obliged to report monthly to the Secretary-General of the Party and to

the regional representative in the Central Committee. The Provincial Secretaries, together with the regional representatives in the Central Council, constituted the Directing Committee of the regional federations.

Thus the principles of election and federation were applied. Supplementing these were central policy, direction, supervision and discipline, while the fighting groups, which were the first spontaneous eruptions of the movement, were subjected to a more general and *civil* control within the newly established sessions. A few weeks after the Constitution was published, when the truce with the Socialists and others was denounced, and the Government threatened severe action against the Fascists, the Party Secretary announced that all members of the sessions were to regard themselves as members of the fighting squads. There is no doubt that the Party and the cause demanded sacrifices.

The Struggle for Dictatorship Within the Party. The March on Rome was not a demonstration that any genuine inward unity governed the Fascist movement. It was not tested, for the Army was not called into action, and the population was passive, out of ignorance and fear. Attachment to Mussolini was evinced in the rapidity with which the *squadristi* returned home as soon as the new Prime Minister gave the command, but this was not the same thing as an inner cohesion which promised steady obedience. Further, immediately upon the March the Party was swollen by all sorts of opportunists and adventurers. These were not following a leader or embracing a faith, but buying the right to a job or favouritism from the new masters. Membership tickets were sold in batches like coupons for the Irish Sweepstake, and these give trouble even to-day, when seniority of membership is a title to various political and economic privileges.[1] Now the discussions and insubordination began, to the serious anxiety of the leaders in Milan and Rome. There were personal and doctrinal disputes. What was Fascism ?

[1] At the end of 1934 the Party decided to award certificates of the March on Rome. To be sure that impostors did not secure these the Party required the requests for them to be published in *Il Popolo d'Italia*. In spite of this some Fascists had to be expelled from the Party for lying.

Was it attachment to Mussolini whatever he did? Was it blind obedience to the local leaders, whether they agreed with Mussolini, or differed from his policy when this did not match what the local leader had expected, and risked his life for, during "the vigil." The ranks had been momentarily closed by the great adventure. Now old scores could be settled and personal vendettas revived.

Political opponents still continued to be seriously handled by the new masters of the State, partly to repay private scores, and partly because complete suppression of opposition was thought to be the logical consequence of the triumph of the "national cause." Half the municipalities were still in non-Fascist hands, and this provided a standing temptation to evict the Socialist and Catholic Councillors, secure the appointment of Royal Commissioners (naturally Fascist), and then fill the offices with brother Fascists. The local boss became transformed, as the term went, after the Abyssinian chiefs, into a *ras*. It must be remembered, further, that Mussolini's first Government was not wholly Fascist. There were local party bosses who could still speak of treachery by Mussolini. The middle classes still expected that Parliament would tame him and tear him away from the ruffians, and this expectation aroused suspicion among Fascists.

Thus here was by no means a favourable atmosphere for discipline. Mussolini's speeches in Parliament and the records of the Grand Council of Fascism reveal the anxiety of the leaders at these occurrences, and their attempts to cope with their causes. For all the commanding influences of Mussolini, it was very difficult to confine the independence of the local leaders and rank-and-file. For hitherto they had not been *made* by Mussolini; they were not his nominees; they could, in their fits of grumbling, even argue that they had made the leader, and were entitled to the spoils. And they expected spoils. They had fought not to give the government to somebody else; *they* wanted to govern. The truth is, of course, that the Fascist revolution was not a revolution, but only the potentiality of one. A Government had been seized, but the State had yet to be conquered. There was no awe-inspiring idea or common programme to which rank and file and leader were willing slaves.

As they did not know quite why they had got into power, it was very difficult to convince them that they must behave themselves like civilised beings. Ideas, not appetites, are civilising. The question was whether Mussolini could achieve this end by the sheer force of his personality and by his political ability. Mussolini succeeded in this task, but it took him about six years.

The Militia is Created. The first action taken by the central Fascist Council (*pari passu* with the local purification and a quieting of dissidence, which are discussed below) served the double purpose of subjecting the most ardent and unruly spirits to the order of the national leaders and sublimating their ambitions, and at the same time of intimidating the opposition parties with a determined show of semi-military forces. This was accomplished by the establishment of the Militia, the force which is still the fighting corps of the régime, whose last word in any fundamental argument is, as Mussolini has said, " lead."

It is important to consider its constitution and, above all, its spirit. For the warrior, more than all other members of a political community, must be sustained by a faith, and upon him must be lavished the Absolutes without qualification, in a shape and colour which will make them worth fighting and dying for. There is reason to assume that all the other members of the Fascist Party may think and argue a little. In them the radiance of the Fascist Eternity may shine weaker and paler than in the Militia. It is most intense and consuming, in the orders and allocutions to, and the discipline of, the Militia, or, to give it its full name, the Voluntary Militia for the National Security. The Grand Council's resolutions of January 12th, 1923, deserve careful reading :

" The Grand Council, obsequious to the orders of the Government (then not entirely Fascist) which prescribe the dissolution without distinction of all formations of the politico-military type of organisation at the end of the current month, declares dissolved by that time the squads of action of the Fascist Party, which will form part of the Militia for the National Security according to the norms which will be laid down by the General Command.

" The character of the Militia for the National Security shall be

essentially Fascist, having the purpose of protecting the inevitable and inexorable developments of the revolution of October ; for which it will preserve its symbols, its insignia, its names consecrated by victorious battles and of the blood given for the Cause ;

" The inward character of the Militia for the National Security must be informed by the sense of a discipline which attains the severest renunciations and the most ascetic devotion.

" The Grand Council invites the Black Shirts of all Italy to be worthy of the greatest honour which can be rendered to a Fascist, that of a fighter for the defence of the State and the Nation whether at home or abroad."

By July 1923, the constitution of the Militia was prepared, and henceforth those who were included in its ranks were subjected to a strict, almost professional, military discipline, and were given many political tasks of an active nature. Moreover they were connected with the regular Army and took an oath of allegiance to the Crown. On the occasion of the final acceptance of the constitution, the Grand Council expressed its view of the character of the Militia in terms which are of such relevance to the general theme of the spirit of the Fascist Party that I must reproduce some of the phrases verbatim :

" The Militia is a great political police. Its task, with or without the co-operation of the ordinary police forces, is that of rendering impossible any disturbance of the public order, any gesture or attempt at sedition against the Fascist Government, and thereby to assure the constant normality in the productive and social life of the Nation. . . . The discipline of the Militia must be inflexible."

In the interests of the general theme the subject of the Militia must be left at this point, to be resumed when we analyse the composition of the Party. For the moment it is enough to have learned *how*, in this first period of Fascism, the leaders swooped on the unemployed bands, and putting the stamp of legality and national utility upon them, secured local discipline and their attachment to the directing centre of the Party. In order to make Mussolini less dependent on the local bosses many hitherto non-Fascists were recruited for the Militia.

Meanwhile, Michele Bianchi, the Secretary-General of the Party and Under-Secretary of the Interior, appointed from time to time special commissioners to various districts to

undertake the task of purification and re-organisation. These were, unfortunately for the population and the later fortunes of the Fascist Party, not neutrals drawn from outside the districts affected, but the most powerful, which meant the most unscrupulous, local leaders. The theme of discipline and obedience to the Duce's instructions was preached all over the country with a special energy by the more constitutional temperaments in the movement, but the interference with, and the preying upon, the regular political and administrative authorities and citizens were still scandalous. For Mussolini, the insurrection was over. He wanted to get down to constructive tasks. " There is no doubt that the second act will decide the destiny of the Revolution," he said in January 1923. It nearly did, in a sense unfavourable to him, as a result of the loss of his hold on the more violent and crude of his followers, the same men in fact who had denounced the truce of 1921 and nearly brought about his retirement.

In April 1923 the Grand Council decreed the constitution of Provincial Trustees. These were to be appointed by a special Executive Board from members of the Directorates of the Provincial Federation. The new Executive Board was established in the place of the Party Directorate to keep in touch with the trustees and execute the orders of the Grand Council, Mussolini's private Council of most confidential advisers.

It gave orders that " since Fascism ought to be a Militia of silent workers, the leaders of Fascism who have high responsibilities in the Government and the Party, must abstain from verbal and written manifestations which might engage the Party or the Government," and in any case they must give previous notice to Mussolini.

The movement was indeed becoming gravely embarrassed by the doctrinal disputes between " orthodox " Fascists and the dissidents, whatever each of these may have meant at the time. Was Mussolini Fascism, whatever he did? Or was Fascism the men of 1919, or 1920, or 1921, or 1922, whatever *they* did or thought? At any rate the Grand Council, rather than the Party Directorate, which was the official trustee of the movement, was now beginning to take a directing hand, and to make the principle of its independent vocation challenge

that of election. It referred to the trustees and other local organs as the "provincial directing organs" of the Grand Council. It had to yield the point that the trustees should be nominated by the Provincial Directorates, but the ratification lay with the Executive Board. Teruzzi, a Militia leader (later the Commandant-General), was given the special task of keeping the Board and the local trustees in contact and harmony. Where the local situation was grave, members of the Board itself were sent down to restore peace and discipline. Furthermore, separate and rather personal organisations that were coming into existence, societies, clubs, and technical groups, using the name and prestige of the Party, and engaging it in furtherance of their own particular views, were declared subject to the orders of the Party, and the Council resolved to bring them under discipline.

It was a strenuous uphill job, for the simple reason that neither the Grand Council nor the Executive was any more united than the movement whose inner contradictions they were supposed to reconcile. The Nationalists supported local violence in order to stimulate reactionary feeling and defer socialist development. They denigrated the original Fascist "intellectuals." In June, faced by the growing tension within the Party between the men of 1919 and the rest, the various groups of intellectuals against the boors, and the Socialist Fascists against the Liberal Fascists, the struggle of all against all for jobs and prestige, and the continued violence, Mussolini confessed to Parliament that in three months it was impossible to transform young men who for two years had been used to a "very special gymnastic" into tin soldiers. It was desired to expel 150,000 of the 550,000 members of the Party.

The Rocca case, which occurred at this juncture, was a particularly striking example of the dissensions and problems which had developed. Rocca, one of the earliest of the Fascists,[1] had hoped that the State would be remade on the constitutional lines he had elaborated. Parliament, he thought, should be composed of delegates of the trade unions and employers' associations, linked together in National Associations, and of delegates of technical groups. These bodies would also exercise a subordinate

[1] Cf. Rocca, *Fascisme et Anti-Fascisme*, Paris, 1930.

legislative power, and would, further, directly advise the Government Departments. (In fact, the Corporate State has come to resemble this plan fairly closely. Rocca was congenial to Mussolini.) Rocca organised a considerable number of these technical groups, and was their Secretary. But Edmondo Rossoni, the labour leader, for his own reasons, and those who looked to the Party as the sole instrument of government and the field for their own ambitions, turned on Rocca fiercely. Rocca said that Fascism was to serve, not exploit, Italy ; that Italy was vowed to Mussolini, not Fascism ; and that the Party was, in the actual state of affairs, rather weakening than strengthening him. The Party bosses of the Farinacci type took up the cudgels as fiercely as they had done a little time previously in their punitive expeditions. All the personal resentments flared up, and the public was treated to a display of the very, very dirty linen of the Party bosses. The Executive Board of the Party, which consisted of the most intransigent of the machinators of the movement—such as Bianchi (afterwards involved in the Matteotti affair), Bastianini,[1] Marinelli[2] (a Matteotti malefactor), Farinacci, leader of the violent wing of the Party, still intent on making life impossible for all opponents, even those inside the Party, and Starace, future Secretary of the Party, decreed the expulsion of Rocca from the Party. Rocca, during all this period, was a member of the Grand Council. Sustained by Mussolini, the Grand Council decided that " the polemical degenerations to which Rocca himself had contributed " should be punished by three months' suspension from all the activities of the Party, instead of expulsion. This case, it is to be repeated, was only one of the many cases of trouble in Paradise.[3]

In October 1923 the Grand Council was obliged to resolve, among other declarations, relating to the Party, the following, which is good evidence of disquiet :

[1] Afterwards rewarded with the Secretaryship of Foreign Fasci, membership of Parliament, and ambassadorships to Tangiers, Lisbon and Athens.

[2] Still Administrative Secretary of the Party.

[3] This was not the end of the Rocca case. He persisted even during the elections of 1924 in attempting to secure the constitutionalisation and liberalising of Fascism. *After* the elections this doctrine no longer pleased Mussolini or the intransigent squadrist leaders. He was expelled from the Party, and thrashed. In 1925 he was irresponsibly accused of maladministration of insurance funds and forced to flee the country.

"The Party must collaborate with the Government by direct means [why *direct*?] without clamour and public polemics. The Party, having dared and accomplished the Revolution, does not intend to unload or shift on to other parties more or less close to it, the sum of its direct political and moral responsibilities. Fascism does not solicit, nor does it reject, the technical collaboration of other elements provided they are loyal and disinterested. . . . The Grand Council declares—in agreement with the Duce—that any attempt to separate Mussolini from Fascism is inane and absurd. Such a tendency will be combated by the Fascists with the positive means of discipline. The practical consensus of Fascism must be superior by its directness, consciousness and warmth to that of indeterminate public opinion. The Party has a vast field for its activity in the administration of thousands and thousands of local authorities conquered by Fascism. [*You have other fields to conquer! Leave the discussion of principles and policies alone! Stop beating your political opponents: it is not at all nice to have these things reported in the Press!—Author.*] Only if the periphery works harmoniously with the centre, will the renewal of the Nation be rapid and complete.

"The function of the representatives of the Government, the Prefects, and those of the representatives of the Party are clearly distinct and different. The Prefect is responsible towards the Government only, and must, therefore, act with absolute liberty within the limits laid down by the laws. The representative of the Party must, with the help of all his collaborators and inferiors in the hierarchy, supervise and excite the activity of the Party in the provinces, maintaining their discipline, guaranteeing the peaceful execution of the reforms, and the progressive development and consolidation, of the Fascist Revolution."

In the face of the growing difficulties in the Party, of bitter and strengthening opposition from without and foreign pressure, a *coup de main* within the Party itself became necessary. The rank-and-file had to be dominated, and the idea that the Party, which had made the Government, could with impunity continue to act as though it *were* the Government, and immune from the ordinary Constitution of the land, must be overcome. The pyramid, with its summit founded upon the strength of the base, must now be reversed so that the base should be indubitably subservient to the summit. Hence, Bianchi was excluded from Party functions, his activities were reserved for the Ministry of the Interior; De Vecchi, Minister of Pensions, was sent to Somaliland as Governor. These men had been

implicated in fomenting local violence and closing their eyes to insubordination. (This, however, was no final dismissal of these men. This was one of the earliest examples of Mussolini's legerdemain. The men were sent off to give the impression of a purge and reassure public opinion. Later, they returned to high office, and received public praise from Mussolini.)[1] The Grand Council, on its own authority, transferred the supreme direction of the Party to a Provisional National Directorate of five members. This was to operate until January 1924, when a plenary session of the Provincial Secretaries together with the Grand Council would meet to consider the state of the country from the standpoint of the Fascist Party, and when also the National Council would meet to consider the state of the country from the standpoint of the Fascist Party, and propose five names for a regular National Directorate to remain in office for a year. The authorities of the Party were now declared to be the Grand Council, the National Council, and the National Directorate. The Central Committee and the National Congress were not so much as mentioned. Moreover, the unique leadership of Mussolini was declared in the resolution that the Directorate could not take decisions of a political nature which interested (beyond the Party) the Nation, without the previous authorisation of the Duce. The Duce would personally choose a Court of Discipline composed of five members, in order to free the Directorate from all affairs of a political or moral order. Two of the members of the Directorate, the Secretary-General of the Party and the Administrative Secretary-General, would be members of the Grand Council.

Growing Autocracy. Indeed, the hotter the discussions raged, the more violent and licentious became the local *ras*, the more did the disputants and the local citizens look to Mussolini, the former regarding him as the leader with the final word, the latter as their saviour. Each body was prepared to accept

[1] Now Count De Vecchi di Val Cismon, De Vecchi returned to Italy as Senator in March 1924. At the Grand Council meeting of February 1925, Mussolini welcomed him with a high eulogium : " Yours is discipline ! You went, I told you to go. You took the responsibilities I confided to you. . . . To-day as yesterday. To-morrow as to-day. Thus is Fascism served. Thus is the Nation served. This is the example to give to the people. . . ." In 1928 he became Minister ; in June 1929 became the first Ambassador to the Holy See ; now Minister of Education.

Mussolini as arbiter and commander in the hope of using him against the others; and each knew that he was the mainstay of them all. If they smashed the Party they would smash him, and if they smashed Mussolini, their individual power and jobs would be swept away by a country tiring of the tyrants. Everything tended, therefore, to increase Mussolini's personal authority. The actual directing organisers of the Party were now nominated by the Grand Council, and the chief among them were made members of that body.

Two tendencies were at work: the exclusion of the elective principle and the closer linking of Party and State. Thus a special organ of propaganda was established, partly on the ground that "it is time that the Party shall be persuaded that its unique object is that of seconding the work of the Fascist Government. It is time, that is to say, that Fascism should realise that with the advent of the Fascist Government, it had attained its ends as a Party and that it must now pursue its ends as a Government. And that now, therefore, more than ever, its own ends are merged with those of the Nation." This lesson took a long time to learn. Indeed, the Party is to this day divided upon it.

The discipline of the Party began to raise problems of acute importance. For example, what should happen to members expelled for "un-Fascist behaviour"? Those who showed signs of friendship and penitence during their expulsion were to be re-admitted back. Those, however, who acted in an unfriendly manner were to be permanently excluded and treated as traitors. Then, also, the serious question was raised of the accumulation of jobs, in the Party, the Government, the Militia and the Trade Unions. This practice aroused jealousy and sarcastic comments by critics outside the Party, and reduced the power of the Party to satisfy the maximum number of capable and hungry persons.

The Elections and Matteotti. Meanwhile General Elections had been decided upon, and the Party Assembly was called as the first stage in the election campaign. One of the reasons for

the elections was to " sublimate " the sporadic violent acts of the local groups. The Party now confronted its first great trial since the March on Rome. Therefore, on January 28th, 1924, Mussolini attempted the task of getting the ranks to close. He asserted that during 1923 the Party had actually been dissolved and reconstituted. He fulminated against the mania of " purism," " nineteen-nineteenism," the " Old Guard," " Fascism of the first hour," " veteranism," which was dividing the Party. How could there be veterans when the Party was not even five years old ? There were only forty people present at the Congress of 1919 ! Nor, he declared, should people try to make a distinction between Mussolini and Fascism, especially when the name of Mussolini was used as a viaticum to fight Mussolini ! Nor should it be believed that the half-dozen men around him were evil counsellors who influenced the good dictator against his better nature ! No ! They helped him, and he was grateful. But he took his own decisions. As for the illegalities committed by Fascism, they would long since have disappeared, *if it had not been for provocation by conscienceless and criminal opposition.* " Fascism and the Government are altogether one ; but there functions and therefore their responsibilities are necessarily different." He was sure that all would fight together for Fascism, if fighting were necessary.

The pressure, the threats, the parade of uniformed force, and the violence, secured the triumph of the Party. The Fascists who killed and were killed during the election campaign added to the prestige of the leaders, and gave them the occasion to commend the discipline of the rank and file. The election campaign and results, however, were the occasion for another spell of " purification." First, Mussolini got rid of the existing Directorate of the Party, with Giunta[1] at the head. Mussolini was pleased with the victory they had brought him, but not with the excessive clumsiness with which it had been secured. The campaign left such a bad taste in the mouths of the sober citizens, even Fascists, that Mussolini hastened to confide the Party to a Quadrumvirate. But only one of these was better than the

[1] A lawyer who practised in Florence. Was leader of an ex-soldier's organisation against Bolshevism. Later organised Fascism in Trieste. Secretary of the Party, October 1923. Member of Parliament. End of 1927 made Under-Secretary of the Presidency of the Cabinet.

outgoing men—Forges-Davanzati, a Nationalist.[1] The others, as events later showed, were not especially happy examples of "purification."

Secondly, local members who had shown weakness during the campaign were expelled. Many had regarded the election as an opportune means of leaving a Party whose real nature they were just beginning to learn. Other citizens were given tickets of membership—such as those not belonging to other parties and "being in possession of every moral and political suitability," who had contributed loyally to the great victory. The Fascist Deputies who were returned to Parliament were forbidden to form a special Fascist group, on the ground that they were but Fascist fighters, like any others, and, hence, were under the direct discipline and orders of the Fascist hierarchy. The Government was still not very sure of itself. There was still a kick left in Italian Parliamentary Institutions, and a Fascist Party might, by constitutional action, maintain its independence of the Duce.

It was at this stage that the gods handed a trump card to the Fascist Party in a manner which gave the indubitable leadership to Mussolini, besides enabling him to clear away the Opposition which was still dogging him in the country and in Parliament. We have already explained how the Matteotti affair shook the position of the Fascist régime and almost brought it down. Members of the Grand Council, the Executive of the Party, and of the Government had been closely implicated in murder! The régime would have been destroyed then and there if there had been a man with the force of character to keep the Opposition groups in Parliament and ready to co-operate under his leadership. The only available man of this stamp was Matteotti—and he was dead. So Mussolini remained master of the field, in face of the egregious tactics of the inept sectarian groups. But the anxieties of the time, the insults to the Party, the doubts and hesitations locally, the many secessions, the re-invigoration of local opposition, gave Mussolini the great opportunity not only to re-assert his authority, but to enhance it beyond anything yet known. He took the full moral responsibility for the sins of

[1] Formerly editor of the Nationalist newspaper, *L'Idea Nazionale*, now *La Tribuna*.

the murderers, for the sins of the Party, and then counter-attacked with point and vigour. He re-established the self-respect of the Party, the members of which, after all, did not like to be thought cowardly murderous and grafters by their neighbours. The days had not yet come when Time, helped on by clever and unchallengeable propaganda, transformed " murder " into " a glorious Revolution." They had fallen into sin, and Mussolini led them to redemption. More, their house had nearly collapsed about their ears, and their jobs had nearly escaped them ! The lesson was plain. He and the Grand Council made the most of it.

Thenceforward the way was clear for the authoritarian tendencies to assume full sway in the affairs of the Party. That was made plain to the Grand Council in the course of a famous declaration by Mussolini on July 22nd, 1924. He trounced the " revisionists " and the " dissidents " ; he had more sympathy for " extremism," since it was a compensation for the tendencies to quietism and compromise, and yet he chid it in so far as it was identifiable with jealousy. (Thus all Fascists could be happy in the fold, since their opponents had been rebuked by the Master.)

" What is the duty of to-morrow ? . . . The next National Council has the duty of finally giving a government to the Party. Such a government must issue freely from discussion and voting. Such a government must be put in the situation to govern the Party. If it were allowed me to anticipate, I believe that the new government would have to act upon the Party inflexibly to improve it, and to render it adequate to novel necessities. It is not only necessary to rid it of the good-for-nothings, the profiteers, of the unscrupulous, violent men ; but it is necessary that all the Party should collect itself in a severer discipline, less prone to those actions and utterances, which being repeated, fatigue one and become conventional. And the necessary intransigence must become intelligent. The Fascistisation of Italy must come, but it cannot be forced. . . ."

For Mussolini, the blood-letting and the " clean-up " afterwards was a lightening of the load. So far he had had to be all things to all men in the Party, and run the Government at the same time. Henceforth, all men in the Party were more likely to be all things to him.

1924 to 1929: third Stage. This virtually ended the second and most difficult period of the development of the Fascist Party. Henceforth the Party was in Mussolini's hands, and the country was in the Party's hands. The tasks of the future were to identify the Party much more closely with the State, in order that the two might benefit from each other's contributions. The Party had to be reduced to an organ of the State, its fighting function diminished, and its new tasks of propaganda, political education, maintenance of "ideal tension," assistance in the realisation of the policies of the Government, and the rearing of youth in Fascist virtues, elaborated and given machinery and means. These years coincided with the Secretaryship of the Party of Roberto Farinacci, from February 1925, until March 30th, 1926, and Augusto Turati from then until 1929. Farinacci was the perfect instrument of the fury which fell upon Italy after the Matteotti affair, the leader of the intransigents and the *ras*, of which he was an outstanding example in Bologna. For the time being he was the favourite of Mussolini, who, now that he needed Farinacci, had no compunction in throwing over in his favour the new counsellors he had taken to himself after the Matteotti clamour had made the appearance of legality and moderation necessary. When Mussolini saw that repression was necessary he picked the right man for it. But Farinacci made two mistakes. He gave people the impression that he and the Party were more important than Mussolini. And his natural brutality inflamed the opposition, revolted the moderates, and finally embarrassed Mussolini. In March, he defended Matteotti's murderers. The Minister of the Interior,[1] Federzoni, pressed for his resignation which, with a sigh of regret, Mussolini "accepted."

Turati set himself to the constructive task of making a machine for the Duce's own use. The Fascist Emblem was obligatorily imposed on all public authorities, and, finally, included in the new State Seal. In 1928, as previously demonstrated, the Grand Council was invested with the character of a State

[1] One of the original and most influential and reactionary Nationalists, he entered the first Fascist Cabinet as Minister of the Colonies, and was made Minister of the Interior in June 1924 to give the country the illusion that the ruffians of the Fascist Party were being brought under discipline. Has since been Minister of the Colonies. Since May 1929 President of the Senate.

institution. Since it linked up the State and the Party, there was naturally a great deal of discussion about the nature of the Party in the Fascist State. As an answer to the demands for an organised doctrine and cultural propaganda, the National Fascist Institute of Fascist Culture was established. The problem was to keep awake the faith and will of the Party, while compressing its political energy inside lines laid down by the central Directorate.

Recruitment of the Party. A chronic difficulty was the admission of new members. Many, seeing that the opposition was scattered and that a Dictatorship had come to stay, were clamouring to enter the Party. It was necessary to keep the local secretaries alive to the importance of very severely scrutinising the credentials of the candidates. The local officials were frequently admonished not to fall into a state of flattered repose, since the Revolution, though it had done many deeds of great importance, was still but in its initial stages. "No rest, no indulgent compromise, but absolute discipline, strenuous vigilance, and perfect fraternity of minds, to preserve what we have attained and to arrive at the ultimate aims of Fascism," resolved the Grand Council, and incessantly echoed the Secretary-General and the Propaganda Bureau. The Grand Council announced that it was now a valuable privilege to belong to the Party, seeing that this was the foundation of Italian life, and had even become a "universal movement." Therefore, besides being ready to acknowledge his faith and defend it with his blood at any moment, the Fascist must obey *without discussion* the orders that descended from the higher ranks. Henceforth, those who wished to be renewed in their membership or re-inscribed must produce last year's membership ticket, or sufficient other documents of a personal nature to prove their worthiness. Recent members were to be excluded from Party office until a sufficient term of novitiate had proved their loyalty and capacity. Especially subject to investigation, was the attitude of the candidate during the months of the Matteotti affair and the Aventine opposition. Officials who admitted "unsuitable, dubious, or disturbing elements" were threatened with severe punishment. Admission was made very much harder in

actual practice also, for the Party no longer needed numbers, since it had State authority and no opponents. The Party, however, needed quality, that is a quite distinct and individual outlook, intense faith, and the assurance that its followers would not modify their views in the face of argument, or, in an emergency, be neutral or even desert to the other side. The mentality and attachments of the past had to be stamped out. No compromise, no quietism, no cowardice in the face of responsibilities imposed by the Party: "no Buddhism," as the Secretary-General said. The past enemies of the régime needed watching and denouncing to the proper authorities.

The Prefect above the *ras*. Meanwhile Mussolini left no stone unturned to root out the local *ras*, who was interfering with the official local authorities. The task was made much easier by the abolition of *elective* local authorities. Indeed, this "reform," which established the Podestà appointed by the Central Authority for communes under 5,000 inhabitants in February 1926, and extended to all others by the Decree Law of September 1926, and, in December 1928, replaced elected councils by appointed committees to co-operate with the Prefect in the Province—this "reform" had three objects and results. It abolished local political opposition to the régime; it suppressed once and for all the local electioneering, with its noise, disturbances and mutual recriminations *within* the Fascist Party; and it made it more certain than before that the State, represented by the Podestà or the Prefect (appointed if not by Mussolini himself, yet under his direct hand and seal), was superior to any local political boss. In January 1927, Mussolini directed a circular to the Prefects, the nature of which no one could mistake: it was the deliberate subordination of Party officials to the Prefect: it set clear bounds between the work of each. This is not the place to reproduce it all, though all of its paragraphs are of first importance.

"The Prefect is the highest authority of the State in the Province. He is the direct representative of the Central Executive Power. All citizens and especially those who have the great privilege and honour of being Fascist fighters, owe respect and obedience to the highest

political representative of the Fascist régime and they must subordinately collaborate with him so as to render his task easier. Wherever it is necessary, the Prefect should stimulate and harmonise the activity of the Party in its various manifestations, but it is quite clear to all that the authority cannot be run on a shared system. Nor is the shirking of authority or responsibility to be tolerated. A single person must be in authority. . . .

" Now that the State is armed with all prophylactic and repressive measures, there are ' residues ' which must disappear. I speak of squadrism, which in 1927, is simply anachronistic and sporadic, but which nevertheless reappears tumultuously in moments of public excitement. These illegalities must end. Not only those which, exploding in the poor little arrogant localities, nevertheless endanger the régime and sow useless and dangerous seeds of rancour, but also those others which develop after serious events. . . ."

In May 1927, Mussolini said that his circular was a fundamental document, because it had settled the position of Party and régime in an unequivocal manner. There was still some difficulty in 10 out of the 90 Provinces. Elsewhere, however, all the Federal Secretaries were subordinated to the head of the Province. There would still be friction, because human nature could not easily be domesticated. This would diminish also. In any case, " I will never give the head of a Prefect to a Federal Secretary, especially if that Prefect comes from the Fascist Party, and if he is, as he should be, an honest official, devotedly serving the régime."

The Party Constitution of 1926

By September 1929, Mussolini could say that the Prefects were at the head of *all* the peripheral forces which expressed the State and the régime. So, therefore, the Federal Secretary was " a true and proper official, outside the ranks, of the Prefecture." " None of you ought to regard this as an arid and humiliating definition. I myself am nothing but an official of the régime, and you yourselves feel that your strength, dignity and prestige, is in this your acceptance and devotion."

In October 1926 the Grand Council—not any representative body of the rank and file of the Party, not the properly constituted elective committees and authorities of the Party—the

Grand Council alone, drew up and approved the Constitution of the Party. The Grand Council was by this time dominated by the former Nationalists, and there was only an insignificant representation of the " veterans " and local *ras* type. It established an oligarchical system dependent on the Grand Council, and, finally, upon the Duce. It implicitly abolished the principle of democracy and federation in the Party ; and regularised the control of the hundreds of thousands of members by several hundred local agents dependent on the Secretary-General of the Party, and through him, on the Duce. All the strings were held and pulled by the Duce and his collaborators ; all the agents reported to them ; all the agents were disciplinable and dismissible by them. I shall show this by a few details, but before this is done, it is important to look at the Preamble of the new Constitution, for it describes the nature and spirit of the Party.

" Fascism is a Militia at the service of the Nation. Its objective : to realise the greatness of the Italian people.

" From its origins which are mingled with the renaissance of the Italian conscience and the will to Victory, until the present, Fascism has always considered itself in a state of war : first to overthrow those who suffocated the will of the nation, and to-day and always, to defend and develop the power of the Italian people.

" Fascism is not only a grouping of Italians around a determinate programme realised or to be realised, but it is above all a faith which has had its confessors and in whose orders, the new Italians, work as militants, expressed in the efforts of the victorious War and of the subsequent struggle between nation and anti-nation.

" The party is the essential organ of these orders, and the function of the Party is fundamentally indispensable to the vitality of the régime.

" In the bitter hour of the vigil, the orders were fixed by the necessity of the battle, *and the people recognised the Duce by the signs of his will, his power and his deeds.*[1]

" In the ardour of the struggle the act always preceded the rule.

" Every stage was marked by a conquest, and the assemblies were nothing but meetings of commanders and followers, at which the memory of the fallen presided.

" Not a friend of dogmatic formulæ and rigid schemes, Fascism feels that Victory lies in the possibility of its continual renewal.

[1] Author's italics.

"Fascism lives to-day as a function of the future, and looks to the new generations as the forces destined to attain all the aims marked out by our will.

"The orders and the hierarchies, without which there cannot be a discipline of the efforts and education of the people therefore receive light and rules *from above, where is the complete vision of the attributes and duties, of functions and merits.*"[1]

As will be observed, the heart of this Preamble is in the right place: the sting is in the tail. Consequently, in the enumeration of the authorities of the Party, the first to be mentioned is the Duce. The Party is to function under the supreme direction of the Duce and according to the principles laid down by the Grand Council. Among the organs of the Party, the Grand Council receives first mention, and is defined as "the supreme organ of Fascism, which fixes the principles of action of the Party in all the fields of the life of the Nation." Its president is the Duce, and it has the power to nominate the chief Party organisers. The chief of these is the Secretary-General, and among other organs that *he* appoints is the National Directorate of the Party. But this, which meets monthly, is presided over by the Duce. The property of the Party is in the keeping of the Secretary-General. The next organ is the National Council which consists of Federal Secretaries, that is the leaders of each Province. They are nominated by the Secretary-General, and they are enjoined to carry out the will and the orders of the Grand Council and the National Directorate. The Federal Secretaries in their turn choose their local collaborators, the nominations to be ratified by the Secretary-General of the Party. The whole political life of the Province, in all its manifestations, comes under the surveillance of the Federal Secretary and his Directorate. And these again are under the supervision and control of the National Directorate, subject to reports, inspections, and audit. Finally, we come to the capillary organisations—the local Fasci: the Federal Secretary chooses the Secretary of every Fascio, and each Secretary of the Fascio appoints a Directorate of five subject to the ratification of the Federal Secretary.

The Duce holds the reins. We need not go into further

[1] Author's italics.

detail. The autocratic or narrowly oligarchic nature of the Party is plain. From this there has been no retreat. The reins were firmly in the hands of the Duce, and the Grand Council.

The next task was to link up the Party with various cultural and educational organisations, and this was done either by the formation of special groups—the so-called *Gruppi di competenza*, conveniently translatable as "Special Professional Groups,"[1] like teachers, or by the creation of institutions for social services, which, while carrying out functions which in other countries are part of the general social services, were in Italy given the special imprint of the Fascist Party. Among such organisations are the Maternity and Child Welfare Institute, the Balilla (Youth Movement), the Leisure-Time Institute, Institutes of Public Assistance, anti-Tuberculosis, and anti-Malaria; Institutes for Scholastic Assistance and Scholarships.

The Grand Council Constitutionalised. Finally, it was necessary to link up the Party as a whole in some regular constitutional relationship with the State more fundamentally than had been achieved as yet. This was done by the Law on the Grand Council of Fascism, passed in December 1928. I have already discussed this body sufficiently to show its central position in the Fascist State, as a link between Party and organs of State. A word or two must be added on the position of the Party in relation to it. By common consent the Fascist Party could no longer be regarded as a Party in the sense of the term proper to a democracy, in which parties freely compete for the control of the Government. In Italy there was now no other Party to fight, and the theory of the State now excluded the dependence of the executive and the legislature upon the electorate. But an organised force existed, and it controlled, linked up and pervaded most of the organs of national life, political, industrial, cultural, athletic. It could not be destroyed, since its roots were so deep and wide. It could, however, destroy the State, that is it could make the ordinary institutions of Government unworkable, by its interference or passive resistance. It was, as a matter

[1] It was for his command, and recommendation, of these, that Massimo Rocca had, as we have recounted, suffered the onslaught of the violent elements of the Party.

of fact, the real operative State ; that is, it was the actual community of the citizens who possessed a sufficiently intense political consciousness, will, and obedience, to govern the whole Nation. It must, therefore, be linked to the continuous support of the State, regarded as the normal conventional political institutions.

This was the purpose of the inclusion of the Grand Council of Fascism in the State as a regular legal constitutional organ; and with its entrance into the company of the normal agencies of the State, it took with it the Party, from the Duce down to the least member of the smallest local Fascio.

Mussolini, in commending the bill on the Grand Council to the Senate (November 6th, 1928), observed that "the National Fascist Party also, which, of the old parties camped in the State, and in perpetual struggle among themselves to dominate it, is now no more than the name, is itself more decisively on the way to becoming part of the organised forces of the State, in that pre-eminent position which its high services in the past, and its great task of the present, and the future, have already, in fact, assigned to it." And the Slavish Commission of the Chamber of Deputies, reporting on the nature of the amending law of December 1929, which even more closely identified the Party with the State, said : " Consequent upon its ideological premises, and its constant policy as a Government, Fascism subordinates to the State every power ; *the Party therefore becomes completely an organ of the State* ; no longer a Party in the old partisan conception, to which Fascism justly and impetuously adhered in the years of struggle, but an *apostolate*, a civil Militia, a nursery of men and a workyard for deeds ; the modeller of the Fascist conscience of the people, the propelling element in every realisation of the régime. The law perfects the inclusion of the Party in the State."[1]

The Party in the Saddle. I have anticipated events by a few months, but this does not matter. The Party was now well in the saddle. It was no longer necessary for Mussolini to have to cry out to the country, " We shall not turn back ! " as he had

[1] By this time the Chamber was entirely Fascist : hence the language of the Report.

done in 1924. The Chamber of Deputies had been elected on the basis of the Law which had made the Grand Council the master of the list of candidates, and the Party the master of the elections. The number of adult Party members by April 1927 was over 800,000; by April 1929 it was over 1,000,000. The original entrants, even those of 1921 and 1922, were now being swamped by men carefully selected as good citizens, and by large numbers already under the influence of the Fascist schools; while successive purges had removed the rowdy, ruffianly, insubordinate elements. Mussolini's title to ascendancy had been proved by deeds, and the entirely subservient Press. Loyalty to him had been given a special pathos after the attempted assassination in 1926. Turati had done his work remarkably well. The Party became a species of Civil Service for the manufacture of obedience. The country had been put in order. Now it was only a question of putting the finishing touches to the Constitution of the Party.

1929–1935: fourth Stage. This was done by amending the law on the Grand Council of December 14th, 1929, which immediately paved the way for a redrafting of the Party Constitution. The law provides (Article 6) that the Constitution of the National Fascist Party shall be approved by a Royal Decree on the proposition of the Chief of the Government, the Grand Council and the Cabinet having previously been consulted. This article at once marks off the Fascist Party from the parties in a democratic State, which, though in some slight particulars acknowledged by the law of the land, have no such substantial status, or subjection, in the general constitutional structure. Imagine the Conservative or the Labour Party of England having their constitutions subject to approval by Order in Council! The questions that immediately arise in the mind as this possibility is contemplated provide the measure of the difference between the Fascist State and the free States of the world. Further, according to Article 7, the Secretary of the Fascist Party is nominated by Royal Decree, on the proposal of the Chief of the Government. Imagine, again, the dependence of the nomination of the Secretary of any of the English Political Parties upon an Order in Council, proposed by the Prime

Minister ! Obviously, the system in which this is not only possible, but essential, must be a system vastly different from a democratic Government. Nor is that all; the Secretary is made *ex officio* member of various State institutions, and the Directorate of the Party is appointable by the Prime Minister. We examine these arrangements more closely later.

Side by side with the deliberations of the Grand Council on its own reform, the final Constitution of the Party was discussed, settled and promulgated on December 20th, 1929. Now this Constitution follows that of 1926 very closely ; there are certain differences of emphasis which are interesting, and which are pointed out presently ; but it is more convenient to analyse it in terms of the latest draft of 1932, which again shows some improvement on that of 1929. Here let us observe only one thing, as the fitting conclusion to the developments discussed, and a fitting approach to the discussion of the Party now arrived at its maturity. Having approved the Constitution of the Party, the Grand Council resolved that it was binding upon all Fascists. Its declaration then continued :

" The Grand Council invite all those who do not feel that they can accept fully and without reservations the rigid discipline of the National Fascist Party to resign within a week. Those who for physical or moral reasons or special personal circumstances tender their resignations, will be able to take part in the subsidiary organisations of the régime ; but in the Party, as in the Militia, all, from the chiefs to the followers, must have the spirit of the front-line troops, capable—especially in difficult times—of any sacrifice."

The leaders obviously had serene confidence in their own strength. The rank and file were not consulted on the constitution, unless it can be said that the so-called " Corporative " Parliament of 1929 (55 of whose members had joined the Party in 1919, 54 in 1920, 65 in 1921, 60 in 1922, 50 in 1923, 36 in 1924, and 30 in 1925, and all carefully chosen at that) had implicitly accepted it by passing the law on the Grand Council ; or that Mussolini, at the Grand Report of Fascism on September 14th, 1929, had put the Party in its place with the remark that its Statute needed " some retouching in form and substance after three years of experience ! "

The Dictatorship was now in full flower, and the Party was its soil and sunshine. At the Grand Report of Fascism, Mussolini accordingly dealt with its nature very thoroughly. He declared that the talk of an "auto-suppression of the Party" was insensate, and could be only the voice of traitors. If the Party went, then the Revolution would have lost its spiritual force. "There is no question of whether the Party should exist or not, because if it were not in existence, I would invent it, and I would invent it such as the National Fascist Party is now, numerous, disciplined, ardent and of a strictly authoritarian structure. The question is to 'situate' the Party in the State. But this has already been done . . . by various measures from the Party Constitution of 1921 down to my Circular to the Prefects, not forgotten nor to be forgotten! Since then, I have proclaimed that the Party is nothing other than the civil and voluntary force at the orders of the State, even as the M.V.S.N. is an armed force at the orders of the State. *The Party is the capillary organisation of the régime.* Its importance is fundamental. It reaches everywhere. More than exercising an authority, it exercises an apostolate, and by the mere presence of its organised mass, it represents the definite, characterised controlled element in the midst of the people. It is the Party with the mass of its followers which gives to the authority of the State the voluntary consent or the incalculable impetus of a faith. All dualism between the State authorities and the Party leaders has disappeared."

"If in Fascism all is included in the State, the Party also cannot escape from this inexorable necessity, and must therefore collaborate subordinately with the organs of the State. It was thought that after the plebiscite the Party ought to resume its autonomous existence, distend and dilate until it included all the Nation, to avoid distinctions between Fascist Italians and Italians who are not Fascists or anti-Fascists. I refer now to my speech at the 'Seciesa' in Milan on this problem. These distinctions are fatal and necessary. Between those who made the Revolution, and all the others who did not make it; between those who believed, and those who laughed at the faith; between those who suffered, and those who waited and betrayed; a difference must be drawn. But does it perhaps happen that the division between Fascists and non-Fascists determines a permanent situation of privilege for the first? Not at all! Fascists faithful to our doctrine do not ask, and do not want to ask, for privileges. They

feel that they are privileged citizens only, and in so far as they have the obligation to be better citizens, more endowed with a sense of responsibility and duty, the first citizens when the question is labour, discipline, sacrifice.[1]

"The Party is not a closed caste, because every year it receives an almost automatic alimentation from the afflux of new generations."

And now we must turn to a consideration of the present nature, organisation and functions of the Party.

[1] This was not true then, and it is not true to-day. The Duce was not describing the existing conditions of things, but was rather admonishing his listeners and sermonising them.—AUTHOR.

CHAPTER XII

THE FASCIST PARTY: NATURE AND ORGANS

THE name *Party* is obviously a strange relic. As Mussolini rightly said, "The character, the attributions, the functioning of the Fascist Party, make of it in the Totalitarian State an absolutely different Institution." The word *Party* is appropriate only where free organisations have the freedom to criticise and eject the existing government and replace it by another. The word party is derived from part, but the Fascist Party is the unchallengeable and exclusive whole of the State. Parties in other countries compete for the right to govern; the Fascist Party possesses it, and has no rivals.

Nature of Political Parties. In democratic countries parties are private organisations with public functions, but without official recognition or authority. Their existence and operation is the natural consequence of the combination of the rights of citizens to vote, to express their opinions with a large freedom, to confer with their representatives or candidates for Parliament, and to meet for, to concert and execute, common efforts which are not illegal. It is true that in recent years the functions of political parties have become more and more subject to recognition and control by the law. Examples are the laws relating to the publicity of election expenditure, as in the United States of America, the various systems of proportional representation, the formation of Committees of Parliament (in the United States Congress, in the British House of Commons, in the French Parliament); so, also, in the regulation of the time-tables of parliamentary assemblies. It is everywhere understood that the organising and dynamic factors in parliamentary government are the political parties. But the fundamental necessity of their freedom from control, as a condition of their effectiveness and

the effectiveness of the whole democratic system, rules out more than the slightest regulation of their functions and place in the constitution.

The Fascist system contradicts all this. The root of its absolute contradiction lies in the denial of the right to combine freely to control the composition of the legislature and the executive. As we have shown, these rights are denied at their very source. This being so, the organisation that exists and calls itself the Fascist Party, though it may carry out some of the functions which are, in fact, carried out by democratic parties in democratic countries, is not a Party. It is something else; precisely what it shall be called may be, and is, hotly disputed. The use of the term Party, by the National Socialists of Germany, the Communists of Russia or the Fascists of Italy, is a misnomer; and the retention of the honourable name of Party is a serious deception to those who do not realise what it really implies.

Nature of the Fascist Party. An examination of the designations proposed by various Fascist jurists and political scientists gives a very clear insight into the actual nature of both the Fascist Party and the Fascist State.

The Constitution of the Party itself uses the term "civil militia at the service of the State." Fascist thinkers are very favourable to this description of the Party, first applied by Mussolini himself in the militant days. However, critics point out that a militia is subservient to the State, created by it, and at its orders, without any manner of doubt that the State itself is master and settles the terms of the service and the character of its servant. No militia is like the Fascist Party, which was first the maker of the new Government, and then became the *exclusive* governor of the nation. It is true that the distinction has been drawn between State and Party. It is also true that the Fascist State lives and works only while the Party is loyal to the commands of the State. Yet the term militia enjoys great popularity, because it represents a vital element in the relationship between Party and State: its presumed readiness to do battle to uphold the hierarchy and its doctrines, its preparation for sacrifice, its warrior-like obedience to orders from above, its

popular origin, its devotion to an impersonal end, its combined militancy, discipline, and severity.

Certain jurists have endeavoured to place the Party in the category of a "public law institution," a conception better understood on the Continent than in England.[1] They mean that this institution belongs to the same class of organs of the State as municipal authorities, public utility companies, even Churches. These have a charter governed rather closely by the State, because though they have a field of discretion and interest limited to their own members, they have also certain duties to the rest of the community. The community, to make sure that these are properly fulfilled, reserves the power to sanction their constitution and to exercise varying degrees of inspection and control. But, critics of this theory ask, what public institution hitherto recognised as such is so closely identified with every branch of national life, and so pervades every aspect of it, material and spiritual? What other institution has ever had its own leader occupying the Prime Ministership of the State? What other institution has ever existed, or does exist, which, by ceasing to fulfil its functions, would immediately cause the collapse of the State? Hence this notion, while properly stressing the legal subordinacy of the Party to the State, is far from marking the true character of the Party.

The Party a Church. There are those who insist on the Church-like nature of the Party, and say, almost, that the Party is a Church. Thus Panunzio, in some writings, insists on the ecclesiastical character of the Party, by which he means, "That character of the Fascist State whereby it is not based on a vacuum like the Liberal State, nor like the State of antiquity on determinate closed social orders, on castes, on the feudal order, on knighthood, nobility, on religious or military classes, on a priesthood, but is based on a vast and ample spiritual association of public law open to all; the National Fascist Party. . . . This association of minds is not a Party, but

[1] Cf. Liuzzi, *Il Partito Nazionale Fascista nel diritto pubblico Italiano* (1930), especially p. 75 ff.; Fantini, *Il Partito Fascista*, 1931. This is a symposium by the foremost jurists and political scientists.

a Church : therefore not the party nature, but the ecclesiastical nature, we might even say the *missionary* nature, is the first character of the Fascist State." And a commentator on this adds : " The Party appears to us as a Church, that is to say a communion of faith, a union of wills and intentions loyal to a unique and supreme end."[1]

This explanation almost completely satisfies the actual facts. It is most important to emphasise this. We have already seen that the Fascist State regards itself as the assertor of a faith, a faith which, it says, applies not merely to the superficialities of economic and political life, but permeates all the aspects of human destiny and reaches into the region of the Absolute, the objective Will, the Fascist God. Its so-called totalitarian and " ethical " nature inevitably converts it into a religion, a theocracy. Free countries regard the State as only one among the many institutions of the national life, and therefore as only a part of a religious conception of life which can be lived with a more or less considerable adaptation to the requirements of the State and the dogmas upon which this is, in the end, based. The Fascist State, however, excludes nothing. It includes all and everything. Therefore those who are faithful to it out of conviction are like faithful members of a Church, and those who oppose it out of conviction like convinced nonconformists. The State has its hierarchies ; its ritual ; its dogmas ; its seminaries. It offers spiritual rewards and punishments ; it prosecutes its mission also by material pains and pleasures, since it must ultimately recognise that man lives not by the spirit alone. To secure its dominion, it is bound to arrange that the faithful shall be kept faithful, even at the temperature of fanaticism, so that the spiritual and temporal ends shall be attained without loss of time and friction, and so that the heretics shall be without influence and, if possible, converted. To this end, the Churches have always needed their militant orders and their missionaries ; and the Fascist State needs such a missionary organ also, an organ of tuition—a real *seminarium Reipublicæ*—persuasion, stimulation, charitable works, public worship, and commemoration of saints and martyrs.

[1] Panunzio, *Il Sentimento dello Stato*, p. 223 ff.

Gentile's View. Yet, again, this conception of the Party as a Church, sound and useful though it be, is still incomplete, for the Party not only teaches and inspires, it actually governs and administers. Therefore, we must consider conceptions of the Party, like that of Gentile, that it is the State or the Nation. Here, apparently, is one body of the faithful, and only one body; but when regarded from one angle, it is simply the State, and when regarded from another, it is the Party, a most unsuitable name, considering its actual situation. Gentile, however, will not unquestioningly accept these identities, which are common among the vain but unintellectual Party enthusiasts, and have caused much suffering to non-Fascist citizens and to Mussolini in the past. Gentile analyses the apparent identities. Thus:

"The Fascist says, 'The Party is the Nation.' This is an affirmation that does honour to the political conscience of the Fascist, but it is exact on the condition that a distinction is made between the Party as men (or in the vernacular, *tesserati*, i.e. members with membership cards) and the Party as a programme. The Party as a complex of members is not the Italian nation. It is, and pretends to be, only a part of the nation. Any mass party has its doors closed, if it does not open them to *any* Italian citizen whatsoever, who to-day or to-morrow desires to enter it. And if the Party denies to the citizens who remain outside the door the security of the rights, or, in other words, the participation in all the goods which constitute the patrimony of power, justice, culture, and altogether, the spiritual good, for whose increase the Italian State is working, and for whose intensification the Fascist Party is preparing and invigorating it, the Party will sink to the position of a faction and will renounce the great revolutionary activity which constitutes its historic significance. There cannot be any other difference between those with and without membership cards than this, that the former are the ministers, that is the servants, the instruments of the idea, which is actuated therefore by their virtue and merit; and the latter are the beneficiaries of the new order. The latter also, in so far as they have no initiative, follow with their particular merit. If they are not the active part, they yet take part also in their own way, with their docile, and more or less willing, passivity, in the construction of the great edifice.

"The Party is the nation in so far as it is a programme; in so far as it is an idea which tends to its own realisation; in so far as in germ, and as animating and propulsive energy, it is the future

nation not yet born or not yet arrived at that maturity which makes it valid in all its import. He who is unable of distinguishing in himself the idea he represents from his own particular person, which, whoever he is, is distinct and separate from all the others outside or inside the Party, does not merit the name of Fascist. He knows not the nation, but only faction."

Finally, Gentile says :

" Thus deduced, the concept of the Party appears to be in open contradiction with another frequent affirmation, and of a fundamental character : ' The Fascist Party is the State.' And it would, in fact, be an intolerable contradiction, if this assertion were understood in the sense in which some Fascists understand it, but indeed erroneously : that is, that the Party as such could attribute to itself or, at any rate, assume the specific function of the powers of the State. This concept is not only absurd, but in contrast with the essential principles of the Fascist doctrine, which asserts the necessity of a strong State. But the contradiction disappears if it only means that the Fascist Party, being the conscience of the State, or the ideas which ferment in it and which it tends to effectuate, has not in its followers and in its leaders differences to overcome between idea and reality, programmes and will, laws and citizens. Within it the State is already a reality."[1]

It is of importance to notice that in 1929, when the Party was given a final constitution, it was Gentile, and others of like mind, who dominated the Grand Council.

An Oligarchy. Thus neither Party nor militia, nor public-law institution, nor Church, nor State, nor Nation, will satisfactorily define the Party. What designation will ? This, I think : The Fascist Party is an oligarchy. It renews itself by co-option and self-purification, like all oligarchies, ruling the nation in the name, and through the organs, of the State, with its own internal rules of behaviour and belief, the better adapted to maintain itself in power and to exclude those who do not think as it does. It may give itself sweet-sounding names such as "a body of political trustees," or an " élite," or an "aristocracy of service." Its nature is cruder than this ; it is simply a dictatorial minority. Its ultimate purpose may be to permeate the country

[1] *Origini e Dottrina*, pp. 79 ff.

and make all men Fascists by a process of persuasion and steady tuition, showing them the actual virtues of Fascism so far as it is in being, the magnificence of the leaders, and treating them to information, philosophy, and æsthetic demonstrations to win them over. But an immediate object is to hold down, and if necessary bloodily crush, any behaviour or ideas which are inconsistent with the dictates of the leaders of the oligarchy.

The Revolution Continues. This is the more necessary since the revolution is not yet complete, that is to say since the large majority of the people are not Fascists. They do not accept the Fascist philosophy in its entirety; they do not even begin to approach the acceptance of its full meaning and implications; they do not even know what Fascism means; they could not even make out what Mussolini's doctrine is supposed to imply. They are either too illiterate, or too dull, or too apathetic, or too instinctively different from the type of man who could be happy obeying the commands secreted in the Fascist formulæ, or too rational and tolerant as a consequence of their own spiritual values, to be Fascists. So that the Italian people has still to be won.

That is by no means all: *the Fascists themselves are still to be won!* Mussolini is under no illusion as to the vaporousness of the loyalties of some "good Fascists." Sacrifice, he has often said, fills the mouth of many a Fascist, but of performance there is far less trace. Gentile says, "The Fascist State is in formation. The purpose of the Party is therefore alive. But it is a duty of forming the conscience, of education, of culture." The testimony is super-abundant that the Fascist conscience has yet to be made. The payment of a subscription, the receipt of a membership card, the dressing up in a black shirt, even if spelt with capital letters, do not transform a man's intellect or character. The revolution is continuing because it is not complete. A party is still needed to wrestle within itself, and with the human beings outside, to arrive at Fascism in the total sense of all of the people, and all of each person. It is not difficult to deduce from this that the Fascist Party will always be indispensable. The members of the Party will be inspired by their leaders, and the land will be inspired by the Party.

In dictatorships, when all opposing parties have been extinguished, the need for a Dictatorship Party still exists, for it has still to do battle with the natural, spontaneous opposition of the citizens, an opposition only a little less effective than it would be if it were organised and made vocal by fully established political parties. The Dictatorship Party has then to grapple with natural dissent and recalcitrance.

. . . . . .

Present Constitution of Party. The Constitution of the Fascist Party now in force is dated November 12th, 1932.[1] It represents the special effort celebrating the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome, a time when the régime was stronger than ever before, not only materially but spiritually, and when the leaders were much more conscious of their own purposes and philosophy. The old Preamble to the Constitution was discarded, and replaced by the *Political and Social Doctrines* of Mussolini. This is the Law and the Commandments, and it provides in general terms the ethic to which the Fascist who swears allegiance to the Duce must be faithful. I cannot remember any other constitution, past or present, which incorporates a declaration of faith of such dimensions, though, of course, Mussolini is in the French and American revolutionary tradition, which favoured the introduction of the organic law by a long doctrinal preamble.

The Constitution of 1926 went very rapidly to the point that the Party acts under the supreme guidance of the Duce and the Grand Council. The autocratic tendency, the call to obedience, is plainly written in the first lines, and the enumeration of the leading authorities precedes the articles relating to the local organisation of the Party. The Constitution of 1929, on the other hand, reacts towards an emphasis on the local organs and their responsibilities. Not their rights, be it remarked, but their responsibility for the healthiness of political life and the efficiency of the Party. Within the very first article, which is concerned with the local Fasci, the Fascio is recognised as the fundamental organism which must include those Italians who are safest for "fidelity, honesty, courage, intellect." Then the

[1] *Statuto del Partito Nazionale Fascista* (officially published), 1933.

article observes, " Any disorder or strife in the life of the Party has its repercussions on all the organs, and, in consequence, on the moral, economic, and social activities which are regulated by them ; not only the leaders but also the followers must feel the weight of such a responsibility."

When we turn to the Constitution of 1932, the first article consists of a single peremptory sentence : " The National Fascist Party is a civil Militia, at the orders of the Duce, at the service of the Fascist State." This appears in the actual commanding articles of the Constitution. Something like it had hitherto appeared, but only in the preamble. The significance of the difference is rather in its consciousness and explicitness than in any change of principle. We must say the same of the changes in the phrase itself : in 1926, " Fascism is a Militia at the service of the *Nation* " ; in 1929, " *the Party* is a *civil* Militia, at the service of the *State* " ; and in 1932, the Party is " a civil Militia, *at the orders of the Duce*, at the service of the *Fascist* State." So Fascism quite definitely becomes the Fascist Party ; the Militia is a civil force ; and the Fascist is no longer told to be faithful to the State, that is to constituted authority, whoever constitutes it, but to be faithful only to the *Fascist* State, that is to the Government when in the hands of acknowledged Fascists.

The Duce Supreme. At the risk of seeming purely pedantic, it is worth asking the meaning of " at the orders of the Duce, at the service of the Fascist State." Now, we know, of course, that Mussolini is supreme, and that *de facto* whatever he declares to be Fascism is Fascism, and that whatever he declares to be for the service of the Fascist State is duly commended, if not always completely obeyed. Does the phrase identify " the orders of the Duce " and " the service of the Fascist State " ? Are they one and the same thing ? Is this a legal recognition (for the Statute is Italian law) of the personal supremacy of the Duce ? Or would a Fascist be acting legally if he refused to obey the orders of the Duce, on the ground that in his opinion they were *not* at the service of the Fascist State ? Does the double obligation mean that the Duce himself is bound to act within a reasonable interpretation of the term " service " ? What Mussolini has called " the byzantinism of making differences

between Party and Nation," would, in fact, be of importance if the separation of powers were a part of the Constitution, and if, in consequence, the Courts exercised a control over the administration independent of the influence of the Executive or the Party. To avoid such potential stultifications, Italian jurists have now thrown over the principle of the separation of powers, and the Party has prevailed upon the judiciary, in the sense that this will give the Party and the Duce the benefit of the doubt. It will defend the Party against the ordinary citizen ; and, while the Duce has the last word in fact, he will have it in law. In the Constitution of 1929, the Duce was *included* in the party hierarchy ; now he is beyond, soaring in the empyrean of the State and of world politics, thence to announce to the terrestrial hierarchy what must be done inside the Party.

The Secretary of the Fascist Party. Two combined lines of authorities stretch out from Rome to the local Fasci : they are Leaders (*gerarchi*) and Committees (*organi collegiali*, which might be translated Boards or Colleges). At the centre is the Secretary of the National Fascist Party, whose tentacles stretch through the Party and its various ancillary organisations, into the Grand Council, and even into the Cabinet. Let us consider his situation in some detail. He is appointed and dismissed by the King on the proposal of the Duce. The Grand Council had, in December 1929, tamely surrendered its right to be consulted on the appointment and dismissal of the Secretary, which it had possessed by the law of December 1928. Thus the Duce is his master in so far as the choice of the man gives the Duce the power to decide the character which he considers fitting for the office. The Secretary is *ex officio* a member and secretary of the Grand Council ; he may be asked to take part in Cabinet meetings ; he is a member of the Supreme Commission of Defence, of the Superior Council of Education, of the Council of Administration of the National Fascist Institute of Culture, of the National Council of Corporations and the Central Corporative Committee ; he is President of the National Union of Retired Officers, of the Administrative Commission of the National Bureaux for the Free Employment

of Workers, Vice-president of the Central Committee for University Affairs, Secretary of the Fascist University Groups, and Commander of the Young Fascist Combatants. Thus his hands are on all the principal levers which control the life of Italy. The Constitution really means that he shall exercise a pervasive influence: it is not content with any superficial or formal membership of these bodies. It declares that the Secretary of the Party, on the bases of the Grand Council's instructions, shall lay down the rules for the work which the various dependent organs shall carry out, while reserving ample control to himself.

We have not yet finished the list of his offices, contacts, and controls. He is presiding and controlling officer over the National Directorate of the Party, to be more clearly discussed presently. He makes the rules for the institution and operation of the Departments of the Party: Political Secretariat; Administrative Secretariat; the National Association of the Families of the Fallen Fascists and the Wounded for the National Cause; the Fascist University Groups; the Young Fascist Combatants; the Women Fascists; the Fascist Associations (the Schools, Public Employees, etc.); the National Olympic Committee; the Dopolavoro Association; Press and Propaganda; History, Archives. He has to maintain contact with the Confederations of Employers, Employees, Professionals and Artists, and the National Institute of Co-operatives, and "to collaborate in the field of work and production when this is necessary." Further, he maintains contact with the other organs of the State, the Presidents of the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies, with the General Command of the Militia, with the General Secretary of the Italian Fasci Abroad. Under his *direct* dependence is the National Olympic Committee, and the Dopolavoro. On the decision of the Duce, he may become president of these bodies, or nominate others to their presidency.

The Secretary nominates the Federal Directorates, the Secretaries of the Fascist University Groups, and the Trustees of the Women Fasci, on the proposal of the Federal Secretaries, who are the immediate trustees of the national leaders in each Province.

The Federal Secretaries. The Secretary has various appointing powers of great importance for the centralised direction of the Party. We have observed that the immediate layer of authorities below the national leaders is composed of the Federal Secretaries and the Federal Directorates. They form the most important link between the smallest capillary organisations of the Party, the Fasci, and the centre. They foster the loyalties of individuals and local groups for delivery to the leaders. These men are selected by the Secretary of the Party, and nominated and recalled by the Duce. The Duce, then, has the last word at this stage also. But the power of selection, having regard to the enormous burden of the affairs of State falling upon the Duce, is necessarily largely independent, at any rate in the first place. Upon him devolves the work of looking out for the new men for inclusion in the governing class. There are plenty of suggestions made in the localities, and by the intriguers in Rome. However, the responsibility is the Secretary's. The Federal Secretaries share the Provincial powers with a Directorate of Seven, proposed by the Federal Secretary, and nominated by the Secretary of the Party.

The Secretary of the Party proposes the members of the National Directorate, the nomination and power of recall lying with the Duce. Here, in fact, the Duce plays the rôle of selector as well as ratifier of the Secretary's choice. Other local appointments made by the Secretary of the Party are to the Secretaryships of the University Groups, and the Trustees of the Women Fasci.

The Constitution declares that the Secretary controls the operation of the peripheral organs, so that every one of their actions shall be instinct with the spirit of Fascism. His appointing and presidential powers give him the force to secure this; but the better to implement his power, he has certain powers of discipline, some at the first instance, some as a court of appeal, which can be better discussed under the special subject of discipline. Now it is impossible to marshal all the attributes of the Secretary of the Party without trenching too much on the situation occupied in the scheme by all the other organs of the

Party. This is itself a testimony to the fundamental authority of the Secretary.

Duce and Secretary. A question of particular importance is the relationship of the Duce of Fascism to the Secretary of the Fascist Party. The Secretary of the Party cannot accomplish his work in any satisfactory way without personal appearances at functions, often several times a day. I must confess that it is almost beyond my comprehension how Signor Achille Starace, the present Secretary, is able to fulfil all the engagements which he imposes upon himself, or which are inevitably imposed upon him. The round of work is prodigious, and it is essential to the nature of the régime. It is a personal régime; and one, therefore, that thrives on acclamation. The essential creed of the Fascist régime is that the quality of supermen is superior to that of any arrangement of institutions. Personal eminence, personal allurement, personal contacts, are put in the front place. A modern dictatorship implies a continuous plebiscite, an election campaign every day. It cannot permanently rest upon some 100 Provincial leaders and less than 1,000 members of the Provincial Directorates, for the simple reason that when the list of personalities arrives at the 100th place in quality, or, in the case of the Directorates, at the 500th place, the distance between these men and the rest of the community is not so great in terms of talent, personality and character, that people will not be inclined to criticise them as ordinary mortals. Of them it will not be said, as of Mussolini himself, " Others abide our question : Thou art free ! " The Fascist régime can thrive only on distance between governors and governed, and on personal contact with persons from a distance. The local populations have no respect for local whipper-snappers. The Italian is peculiarly a person who cannot be cheated under his nose. His sense of the ridiculous very soon strips dressed-up humbugs. But, conversely, he is especially fallible when grandees arrive, spell-bind him with a flashy, noisy entertainment, and then depart in a cloud of dust before they are seen through.

So it is inherent in the nature of the people and the régime that the Secretary of the Party shall make personal appearances. But if he does, there is the stringent necessity that

he should subordinate his own triumphs and personality to governing the Party, and winning the people and the rank and file of the Party, not for himself but for the Duce. The Duce must also choose a man who is an abnormally capable administrator, since he has to supervise the work of the Party, the headquarters at Rome, and the connections with all the institutions we have mentioned and the Provincial authorities also. This man must, in addition, possess personal attractiveness or accumulated prestige sufficient to win the loyalties of all with whom he comes into contact. Finally, he must not outshine the Duce, or wish to outshine him, or differ from him seriously on matters of principle.

From the early days of Fascism, Mussolini has been able to find such men. The reasons are simple. He so far towers above them all that nobody could have competed with him for the hearts of the Italian people, and he was in so strong a position that he could pass over men more popular than those who were actually chosen, such men for example as Balbo, Grandi, or Rossoni. Now, while Mussolini lives, or at any rate while he retains his vigour, this separation of the power of government into the branch manipulated by the Duce (the application of the loyal energies of the Fascist Party to the Government), and the other branch (the tending these loyalties), will cause no harm. But inherent in the separation are some very great difficulties : it depends upon the personalities of the Duce and the Secretary and of those who surround them.

Since Farinacci's short term of power the lesson of subservience has been well learned. At present it is remarkable how, in all the accounts of ceremonies at which the Secretary of the Party presides, the name of Mussolini is made to stand out during the proceedings and in the newspaper accounts. The frequent interruptions of his speech or of the ritual by cries and cheers for Mussolini cannot, surely, be too flattering to the man who hears them. " Duce ! Duce ! Duce ! " comes the massed staccato chorus, square in the middle of the Secretary's enthusiasms, or of an argument with the cogency and persuasiveness of which he is very pleased. The whole arrangement of the Press reports, their position, type, the wording of the headlines, is either done with a remarkably sure instinct, or on principles so clever that the

devil himself might have formulated them. Mussolini is, indeed, fortunate in his collaborators' fidelity.

For example, the first Secretary General of the Party (in 1919 and also from November 1921 to 1922) was Michele Bianchi. He had been of the extreme syndicalist revolutionaries before the War, and became a faithful follower of Mussolini. He advocated intervention, went through the War in the infantry, and afterwards joined the staff of the *Popolo d'Italia*. He was a Quadrumvir of the March on Rome, and then became Under-Secretary of State for Public Works, and later Minister of the Interior. He was made a partial scapegoat for the Party squabbles of 1923. When he died in February 1930, Mussolini said in his commemoration :

" For fifteen years Michele Bianchi has collaborated with me, shared my tasks, marched towards the same end. . . . He was a faithful friend like all the Black Shirts who disinterestedly fought for the triumph of the régime and he never once presented me an account for his Fascist merits, though they were very great and patent ; he never once put conditions down for his ' obedience,' reserves upon his discipline, he never pretended that his ' first hour,' really authentic, or his substantial, not formal intransigence, should be converted into a privilege or a career. . . . He never spared himself."

The present Secretary, Achille Starace, twenty-four years old when the War broke out, served with great distinction. After the War he organised Fascism in Venezia and Trentino, taking part in many Fascist expeditions including the assault on Bolzano, and the *Avanti*. He served as Vice-Secretary of the Party for several years, became Member of Parliament, acted as one of the Party Inspectors, and specialised in organising the Dopolavoro and the Youth Organisations. He became Secretary in December 1931.

As an illustration of Mussolini's personal power of attraction, and his Secretary's attachment, let us quote the offer of resignation made by Augusto Turati[1] in March, 1929 (afterwards accepted for discreditable reasons never published but only

[1] He was a law student and journalist ; served in the War ; organised Fascism in Brescia, especially securing the adhesion of various agricultural associations. He was one of the leaders of the March on Rome. Afterwards he became organiser of the Fascist Trade Unions and head of the Militia in Brescia. He was elected to Parliament in 1924, and in May 1925 became Vice-Secretary of the Fascist Party.

whispered, and followed by five years banishment to the Island of Rhodes) and Mussolini's reply. Turati wrote :

" Duce ! On the 7th April I shall have completed three years of my office as Secretary. The balance of my modest work you know : I believe I have served faithfully and conscientiously. Whatever your command may be, you know that I will respond as I did three years ago. As you wish ! Therefore allow me also to open my heart to you. I am certain that it would be better for me to re-enter into the ranks. It is necessary, Duce, that someone shall give this example ; to depart without asking any other office or any pension ; to depart putting oneself on the alert and saying to you : thank you for having allowed me to serve you and for having given me more than I merited for my qualities."

To this the Duce replied in the course of his Grand Report to the Fascist Congress of 1929 :

" To this letter in perfect Fascist style I gave an answer, ordering Augusto Turati to remain at his post and to continue his work. Augusto Turati has merited greatly of the cause of the Fascist Revolution ; he is a man on whom I can count, on whom the régime can count. But the cycle of his activities is not ended. The National Fascist Party must be grateful to Turati. During the three years of his secretaryship he has created institutions which have entered definitely into the life of the régime. . . . He has extended the action of the Party to all the categories of the Nation. This is now the third act of the piece and it must merely be accelerated ! But the greatest merit of Augusto Turati was that of having realised, in the bosom of the National Fascist Party itself, the doctrine of the State. When he cried to the Fascists : ' You willed a strong State ; accept it, and even adore it ! ' he expressed, in the most solemn and the most religious form, the fundamental requirement of the State in general and the Fascist State in particular."[1]

The Directorate. The Secretary of the Party presides over the Directorate, composed of two Vice-Secretaries, one Administrative Secretary, and six members. This body is convened normally once a month by the Secretary, but special meetings may be called by the Duce at his own discretion, when he presides over the meeting, and the Ministers of Internal

[1] Turati was rewarded with the editorship of *La Stampa* ; but, alas ! there was backsliding. He is confined in Rhodes. See Turati, *Una Rivoluzione e un Capo* (1927) ; and *Il Partito e i suoi compiti* (1928).

Affairs, the Commander-General of the Militia, and the Minister of Corporations take part. The general results of the discussions are published in the Orders of the Day, circulated to each local Fascio, and published in the Press. The various members of the Directorate are linked with other institutions of the State or the Party : the Vice-Secretaries of the Directorate are members of the Grand Council, the National Council of Corporations, and Vice-Commanders of the Young Fascist Combatants. The Administrative Secretary is a member of the Central Committee for University Affairs. The disciplinary powers of the Directorate, in first instance and on appeal, are discussed later, and so are the particulars of its propaganda work. Suffice it to say here that, together with the Secretary, this is the general staff of the Party, very close to Mussolini and the Grand Council.

Since December 1931, the six ordinary members of the Directorate retain their Provincial Secretaryships (from which they are chosen), the purpose being to maintain vivid in them the sense of provincial life and needs and keep the centre in touch therewith when the Secretaries come to meetings in Rome. They hold office for a year only, since it is the will of Mussolini and Starace to avoid a Party bureaucracy. At present, the oldest of them is about forty-five : the others are much younger. They have been in Fascism from the beginning, and most have no other profession than journalism and politics. They keep the whole country under surveillance ; they know why the poorest sparrow falls if it has anything to do with the fortunes of the Party, and in Italy what has not ? They are engaged in a perpetual round of duties, stimulating enthusiasm ; inspecting work done ; distributing prizes and praise ; offering condolences on the death of Fascists ; appearing in processions ; preaching the good tidings ; and generally encouraging the assumption of the Fascist faith and the Fascist style. They live in a whirl of excitement, punctuated by the anxious question : " How long will it last ? " They, more than any others, experience the " high moral tension " postulated by the Duce as one of the principal conditions for the maintenance and completion of the régime. For them the principle of leadership is a happy one, for they lead. *With hardly an exception they are the offspring of the middle class.*

The National Council. With the previous authorisation of the Duce, the Secretary of the Party may convene the National Council of the Party, which consists of the Federal Secretaries. The Secretary is its president, and its function is to examine the activities and situation of the Party and to discuss general instructions for executing whatever measures are thought necessary. It meets only once a year, since other contacts between the Directorate and the local leaders are very frequent. The meeting is always made into a great public demonstration of the Party. Therefore on each occasion it is held in a different part of Italy, to cheer the inhabitants with a *festa*, give the local authorities the thrill of preparation and public exhibitionism, of mobilising the Youth Organisations, and bringing the locality into living touch with Rome. The city of meeting always feels itself flattered, and the Duce is always cheered. In 1934 the Council was held at Turin (not a very Fascist city), and on January 3rd, the famous day of Mussolini's speech of defiance of the Opposition in 1925, the newspapers said: "The Savoy and Fascist city receives, *enthusiastically acclaiming the Duce*, the glorious ensign of the Party."

The *Corriere* commented the next day:

"The Fascist day in Turin, on the occasion of the National Council of the Party, will remain luminous and magnificent in the history of the Italy of Mussolini. Splended pictures, highly coloured visions, now crowd into the memory of the living and recall the unforgettable hours: there are multitudes on the march, there are rows and rows in the formation of an army, there are sheaves of flags and standards, hedges of the tricolour moved by the breeze in a palpitation composed of a thousand palpitations, there are songs, music, cries, applause: a gigantic hymn and a gigantic parade. The soul of the city and its soil has once more risen, daring and young, towards the sky of Italy to shout out its enthusiasm, always being renewed, and once more to the Duce, far away, but present in thousands of pictures, in thousands of shouts, in hundreds of hearts (*Strange declension, the numbers drop! Author*) has attested its most noble faith of warrior and worker, ready for all tasks and all battles."

This passage is interesting also as a characteristic piece of *Fascist* journalism, which is supposed to be "non-demagogic," and for its concentration of attention on the Duce.

The Grand Report. The last central authority of the Party is the meeting which hears the Grand Report of the Duce. No regular interval is fixed for this. The convening of it depends upon the march of public events and the expediency of a great rally in Rome of all the chiefs of Fasci, the Grand Council, the Directorate of the Party, the National Council and the Federal Directorates—something like a thousand people. But other members of the Party come also for a treat of travelling, sightseeing, conviviality, and to hear the Duce in person. The sight is very stirring; and the members return to their towns and hamlets in an apostolic dream-state, each, in the inward recesses of his being, a little Mussolini, and for a few days the physical imitator of the hero. Indeed, these are exciting occasions ! And Mussolini knows that, as his father was wont to make the iron red-hot in order to be able to bend it in the shapes he was resolved to have, so by heating up human beings in this way their souls can be the better bent to serve their maker. Yet it is not always by the ordinary arts of demagogy that their hearts are warmed. Mussolini sometimes speaks bluntly, and with extraordinary frankness and challenge. But then, no one may answer back.

The Federal Secretaries. We arrive at the stage intermediate between the national leadership and the smallest outlying cells of the Party organism : the Provincial stage. As we have already remarked, the Provincial Party authorities, namely the Federal Secretaries and the Federal Directorates, are nominated by national headquarters. They are little else than the agents of the national leaders, though they have the right to be called to the two national councils, the National Council (consisting of them only) and the Grand Report of the Duce. But there is no element of independent status or power which makes them in any way the givers of authority to the central leadership. They are the creatures of the central authority, very closely connected with the Duce himself through his power of nomination and recall, and very important to him as the antennæ in the provinces. They are bound to implement the aims and carry out the orders of the Secretary of the Party. He is their everyday master; and Starace, to secure closer

contacts between the provinces and the centre and to avoid bureaucratic routine and waste of time, has given them regular times when he can be seen personally in Rome, though for urgent matters he is available at any time.

The Federal Secretary has to promote and control the activity of the local Fasci throughout the Province. He has to exercise a control of a *political* character over all the organisations of the régime. The word political means that he is to avoid, so far as possible, interventions of an administrative, economic, or religious nature that do not reasonably enter into the sphere of political authority.

Like the Secretary of the Party on the national scale, the Federal Secretary on the provincial scale keeps in close contact with the various representative institutions of the régime, the Senators and the Deputies and the Command of the Militia for his area. He is president of the Inter-Syndical Committee (of the various employers' and employees' associations in the area), which gives him immediate contact with all that is going on in the field of industry and labour. He is the President of the Administrative Committee of the Employment Bureaux, which, besides bringing him into direct relation with the problems of the labour market, enables him to ensure maintenance of the rules of precedence for the employment of, first, Fascists, and then members of the legally-recognised Fascist Trade Unions. He is President of the Charitable Work Organisation in the area, and the importance of this can only be estimated by remembering that it is especially in the field of charitable assistance of every kind, and supplementary to the ordinary poor and unemployment relief in a time of serious crisis, that the Party has been able to extend its political mission to the citizens. Not too remotely connected with this aspect of service and domination is the Presidency of the Provincial Dopolavoro, which spreads its succouring tentacles over nearly every form of cultural, recreational, and athletic activity, so that it is very difficult for anyone who has ambitions in any of these fields not to fall under the sway of the Party organisation.

He is, of course, the convener of the Provincial Directorate, which must meet at least once a month. At least once a year he must call the Secretaries of the Fasci together to report to

them on the situation of the Province, the Party, and even the country in general. The Constitution itself says " to examine and illustrate the problems of the life of the Fasci, and the political, moral and economic problems of the Province." He personally edits, or supervises the editing of, a Provincial Fascist newspaper, usually a weekly.

The Register of Members. He controls personally (or through direct deputies) the keeping of the register of the members of both the Provincial and the local Fasci, and of the archives. This is an extremely important function, and one to which the Secretary is held to very strict account indeed by the central authorities, since not only does the safety of the Party compel proper supervision of the right of candidates to be admitted and retained, but there are problems of precedence in membership in terms of time which give privileges in relation to jobs and subscriptions. Falsifications of the registers and the membership cards are by no means unknown. Thousands of people joined the Party before 1922 ; since 1922 many hundreds have joined these " *Fascists of the first hour* " as the saying goes. Hence the actual issue of the membership cards is vested in the Provincial, not the local, authority, though it is to the local Fascio that in the first place the request for admission is made, and from which all enquiries necessary to determine the suitability of the candidate are undertaken. For the issue of the cards, the Federal Secretary bears personal responsibility.

The Directorate of the Province forms a deliberative council for the Secretary ; it participates in the disciplinary arrangements of the Party in a fashion we presently explain ; and various branches of the work can be distributed among its members.

Suitably to their functions and the character of the régime, the Federal Secretaries are youngish men, between thirty and forty. They are almost without exception the offspring of the upper and middle classes. They are usually university graduates, by diploma or by career, lawyers, physicians, journalists, engineers, or professional politicians. They may expect, if their work is good, turn by turn, to be made members of the Directorate of

the Party, or Inspectors of the Party, or to be given situations as Secretaries of Syndicates, and perhaps in time to become Podestà or Prefects.

Local Fasci. We arrive finally at the base of the pyramid : the local Fasci. The Constitution says in its second article that the Party is constituted of *Fasci di Combattimento*, groups of fighters, which are grouped Province by Province in the Federation of Fasci. This description of the Party gives the impression that the original initiatory units are the local groups, and that they then proceed by free action into federated units. I say free action, because federal bodies are either freely constituted by the smaller units, or else are not federal. The truth is that the words federation and federal are still used, although all freedom has long departed from the Party ; the words are relics from the first Party Constitution of 1921, and come directly out of the era of the Democratic State and Party Government. Indeed, no local Fascio may be constituted or dissolved without the authorisation of the Secretary of the Party ; the Federal Secretary may at his own discretion organise the local Fasci into regional groups or in sub-sections, and appoint directors for these organisations. And the Secretary of every local Fascio is appointed by the Federal Secretary, who, further, ratifies the local Secretary's proposal of the name of five people to be the local Directorate. In July 1934, in order to penetrate the nation more minutely, the Secretary of the Party ordered the Federal Secretaries to establish Sectors within the Fasci and the Regional Groups, and the Sectors may again be sub-divided into Nuclei, corresponding to specific groupings of streets, or a single street, or even a part of a street. The leaders will be appointed by the Secretary of the local Fascio. A Neapolitan " veteran " (aged thirty or thereabouts) Spampanato, holds that this reform means that " Fascism is perfecting the utilisation of its energies." He sees in it " more democracy," believing as he does that Fascism is democracy.[1]

On July 16th, 1934, it was also established by the Directorate that the Secretary of the Party has the right to dissolve the local Directory and to appoint a commissioner to govern for a

[1] *Democrazia Fascista*, pp. 180 ff.

time in its place. This was found to be necessary to stop fierce and scandalous squabbles among Fascists.

The first duty of the Secretary of the Fascio is " to know the political and moral antecedents, as well as the means of livelihood, of every member, and to demand that, also, in the course of ordinary activity, there shall be observed the spirit and the discipline of Fascism, referring, when it is necessary, to the Federal Secretary those who fall short of their expected duties." He is personally responsible for the exact keeping of the register of members. At the beginning of the Fascist Year he calls together the Fascists, usually in the *Casa del Fascio*, the Fascist House, the more or less elaborate permanent local headquarters, to communicate and illustrate the programme to be carried out, and on this a discussion is permitted. Its nature we characterise presently. During the year at least one further report is made. Side by side with each Fascio there is a Women's Group, which sponsors a Group of Fascist Girls. And side by side with the Fascio there is a Fascio of Young Combatants.

The Militia (Voluntary Militia for the National Security). Nobody except the most carefully selected Party members can get into the Militia. Recruits are chosen from volunteers coming from the Young Fascists at the age of twenty, and are selected for political and combative reliability. In the case of general or partial mobilisation of the Army or Navy, the Militia is absorbed by these, individual by individual. Its chief purpose, however, is to safeguard the Fascist régime. Its members are Fascists before all else.

The Militia is divided into two main groups, the general Militia, forming over 95 per cent of the total, and the special branches. The former is unpaid, and contributes towards its own clothing and equipment. Its members serve out of faith in the régime, and, more seriously, in Mussolini. Their periods of service and training are after their own working-hours and during holidays and week-ends. This is feasible since there are Labour Legislation stipulations about the annual holiday to which each man is entitled. The teachers of the Militia are retired officers of the Regular Army who are themselves grouped in a Fascist Party

Association. Civil instruction, or more precisely politico-religious indoctrination, is provided by the special courses of lectures for the Army, and the work of the Institutes of Fascist Culture. Both the military and the political organs of the régime concentrate the most careful attention on the Militia. The spirit of the Militia can be gathered from its Ten Commandments (quoted on page 442 below), and from its Prayer, which runs thus :

" Oh, God, who lights every flame and strengthens every heart, renew my passion for Italy in me day by day ! Make me worthier of our dead, so that they themselves—ever strongly—shall answer to the living, " Present ! " Nourish my book with Thy wisdom and my rifle with Thy will. Make my eyes sharper and my feet more secure on the sacred ways of the land : on the roads, on the coasts, in the forests and on the fourth shore which once was Rome's. When the future soldier marches by my side in the ranks, let me feel his heart faithfully beating ! When the standards and the flags pass by, may all the faces recognise themselves in that of the fatherland ; the fatherland which we shall make great by each carrying his stone to the workshop ! Lord God ! Make Thy Cross the sign which precedes the labarum of my Legion ! And save Italy in the Duce always and in the hour of our beautiful death ! Amen."

Finally, in the Regulations of Discipline of the Black Shirts of the Militia,[1] occur these passages :

" The fighter of the National Militia serves Italy in the mystic purity of spirit, with unshakable faith and inflexible will ; he despises, above every other baseness, the prudence which is born of opportunism ; he longs for sacrifice as the supreme reward of his faith ; feels the proud beauty of the apostolate to which he has devoted himself to make stronger and greater the common Mother.

" Therefore he knows only duties, and he has not the right except to the joy of fulfilling them. He is as proud of obeying as of commanding since he who most blindly obeys exercises upon himself the most difficult of tasks. Leader or follower, whether he gives orders, or whether he is their executant, the Black Shirt of the Voluntary Militia for National Security must always be to all an example of this spiritual purity."

Its peace-time function is to be on the watch for counter-revolutionary activity, to give pre-military instruction to those

[1] Cf. *M.V.S.N.*, by Vittorio Verne, 3rd edn., October 1934.

between eighteen and twenty, compulsory on all Italians by the Law of December 1930, and to prepare itself by proper exercises for mobilisation in defence of the régime at any moment. It may be called up for reasons of public order, for reviews or parades, for ordinary instructions and manœuvres, encampment and exercises. The latter occur on Sundays and holidays, when the instruction and exercise reinforce a martial spirit and military practice. The members are armed with rifle and dagger, and each battalion has a complement of machine guns similar to those used by the Army. Usually the exercises are of local scope, but occasionally there are wider concerted manœuvres. From time to time the Militia is called out to cope with various public calamities, such as floods, earthquakes and fires. Lest this should arouse complaints from employers, these mobilisations are regarded as military mobilisations ; the Militiaman, who is secured in his employment, must respond. Many have received medals of valour in these moving events by flood and field ; and many more have received the special cross for seniority of service in the Militia.

The Defence of the régime is embodied in the call to preserve " public order." Partial mobilisation may be ordered by the Minister of the Interior, the General Command, the Prefects, and, where there are no other political or military authorities, by the Podestà. But general mobilisations can be ordered only by the Chief of the Government.

Naturally, the Militia is nourished by various special measures of assistance. It receives free medical attention, there is a special Institute for Assistance in the form of grants of money, scholarships to the orphans of Militiamen, gratuities to the out-of-work, gratuities to prolific fathers. Regular sports activities are arranged, and there is a " Mussolini Sword " and Cup. The money is contributed by the richer members of the Militia, or special gifts are made by outsiders. Permanent organisers, of whom there are about 8,000, are, of course, paid by the State. The total spent per year on the Militia, according to official figures (1931–32) is about 102 million lire, or £2,000,000 at the current exchange.

The Militia also serves to organise defence against attacks from the air ; to watch the coming and going across the frontiers

and the coasts; and some of its members, assimilated to the Army, form a Libyan Legion.

University students usually enter the special groups of University Militia, since the authorities recognise that they need distinctive treatment.

The special groups of the Militia are paid, and attached to the appropriate Government service. The principal ones are the Railway Militia, the Militia of the Ports, the Forest Militia, the Militia of the Posts and Telegraphs, the Militia of the Frontier. These men are in reality Fascist inspectors, who act as paid supervisors. For example, on the railways they put down pilfering, which was very common, and stop damage to the seats and luggage racks. In times of emergency, especially for the Fascist régime, their function would be to make certain that the lines of communication were not sabotaged. They have the powers of the constabulary relative to search and the investigation of crimes in their particular field of vigilance.

Mussolini once said, "Whoever touches the Militia will get lead!" This was the expression among very many of the truth that in the last resort, when the shouting and the tumult of propaganda dies down, and when the free dinners have been consumed, the régime relies upon bullets.

There are about 450,000.[1] Militiamen, that is, only about one in four of all those in the Fascist Party. The régime chooses reliable fighters: the physically fit, and the unquestioning, the brutal, the rhapsodical, enthusiasts. Nor may too large a proportion of the population be armed! Its disciplinary code and its sanctions are much more severe and elaborate than those of the Fascist Party in general.[2] There is, for example, the crime of desertion. The Militia must not be diluted by apathetic elements.

How many would give their lives for the régime? It is hardly necessary to ask; for the show of force prevents the question from ever being put. This, I think, is certain, that at the sign of

[1] In January 1934 there were 37,000 officers and 417,000 minor officers and ranks.

[2] How careful selection must be, is to be seen from the horror of the shock when it was discovered that some of the fifteen culprits brought before the Special Tribunal on October 20th, 1934, for "anti-Fascism" in the Veneto district, who were in touch with the *Giustizia e Libertà* group in Paris, were members of the Militia.

danger some 300,000 men (not all the Militia, but with some outside it) mainly between eighteen and forty-five, would be ready with rifles and machine guns. An organised and disciplined force of 300,000 men with machine guns can hold down any country in any crisis, short of war, which is not too prolonged, and can then be explained away by the Party Press. Régimes of this kind, whether good or bad in their effects, can be sustained for long years by the machine gun. But the hands that fire them must always be in training, and the minds that give and take the orders must always be tightly packed, to the exclusion of all else, with the religion of the movement and the personality of a Mussolini, Commander General of the Fighting Black Shirts. Additional spiritual assistance is given by the Chaplain, and he is assured of the moral and authoritarian rank due to a centurion !

Chapter XIII

THE FASCIST PARTY: COMPOSITION

Recruitment. Admission to the Fascist Party is given by the Federal Secretaries, after candidates have applied to the local Fascio and the latter has made investigations. The Constitution itself lays down no principle of selection, but concerns itself with recruitment in two articles only. Article 14 regulates the so-called Fascist Levy, the regular annual date, April 21st, on which the various ranks of the Young Fascists, from the Balilla upwards, enter into the rank above, and therefore the Young Fascists into the Party. Article 30 permits the grant of a membership card *honoris causa* to the badly wounded in the War, to those wounded in the cause of Fascism, to the families of fallen Fascists, and to fathers of families with seven or more children to support, since prolific procreation is, according to the Fascist philosophy, a commendable patriotic service.

Since the entrance into force of the Party Constitution of 1932, the only regular method of recruitment is from the younger generation, as its members reach the age of twenty-one, after satisfactory passage through the various stages of preparation designated by the Fascist leaders. Of these stages we shall have more to say in a later section of this discussion.

What light does this throw upon the nature of the Fascist State and the Party? We may find an answer by considering the development of recruitment for the Party, and the reason for the present "closed" arrangement. Until 1924, the Party needed everybody it could get, for the establishment of its power; it demanded numbers before anything else. But the local leaders were almost completely independent in the matter of admissions. Their interest was to gather as many as they could; and it became the interest of thousands to join the newly risen power. At the end of 1923, the Grand Council announced that the "Party must tend, with daily effort, to augment its

political and moral efficiency by means of a cautious and qualitative work of proselytism, with the opportune rejection of unsuitable elements and with the acceptance of those who, at their request, or *ad honorem*, wished to collaborate in the reconstruction of the national life." The events of 1924 and early 1925 caused the leaders, and in particular Mussolini, to hit back hard at those people in the Party who had almost betrayed the ideals for which he himself stood. The Secretaries of the Party were no longer congratulated, as they had been, on their magnificent lists of new adherents, but rather advised to sweep out the unsuitable members, and to issue stern warnings about the admission of new applicants. Admonitions were given about a discernible slackness in the award of *ad honorem* memberships; and at the same time those who had merited well of Fascism by their conduct during the recent election were recommended for inclusion in the Party. But from this date commence very definitely the control of the local Fasci by the independent authority of the central headquarters. This was the point where Mussolini declared for "absolute intransigence." On June 21st, 1925, he publicly stated that no more *ad honorem* cards should be given.

"We do not want to create this species of superannuated and senators of the Party. From now onwards to obtain admission *ad honorem*, you must either have written a poem more beautiful than the *Divine Comedy*, or have discovered the Sixth Continent or have found the means of annulling our debts to the Anglo-Saxons."

Towards the end of 1925, orders were given for the closing of the registers until further notice, and in January 1926, the Grand Council set down a number of general rules and affirmations regarding admission. Briefly, these emphasised the high importance which the movement had now attained in the country, that membership of the Party was therefore a privilege which could not be and ought not to be conceded to everybody without distinction, but only to the "meritorious and the superelect." To make sure of this, to avoid purely quantitative criteria altering the aims, structure, and character of the Party, they required that documentary evidence of identity and character should be produced, and that conduct and during the Matteotti

affair should count heavily as the determining factor in the question of admission.

The local Fasci proceeded to the further inclusion of members. It must be remembered that there are always two battling tendencies in the matter of recruitment to the Party. There is the desire of the leaders to see the Party swell to the dimensions of the whole Kingdom, supported by the desire of local Party officials to be able to announce a large increase in their particular districts. There is, on the other hand, a fear that there may be admitted into the Party elements which may be positively inimical to its ends and disturbing to personal relations, or simply lethargic passengers who will do no good themselves and may infect others with their political laziness. These two tendencies are always at work, and were particularly potent round about 1926, when the Party had just arrived at a position of absolute power in the State, and when, therefore, the need for careful selection of the members was highly important.

The Party Closed, 1927–1932. However, the lists were still left open to ordinary adult requests for admission until 1927, when the numbers of the Party reached nearly one million, and this after a careful comb-out, (during 1927 2,000 leaders and 30,000 members were expelled as "unworthy to fight in the ranks under the sign of the Lictor's Rods"). The leaders were now quite convinced that they could proceed with much greater severity. In point of numbers the Party had reached saturation point, judged by the standard of the *promptness* of their adhesion. For 1927, it was therefore arranged that new admissions should be prohibited; that the card for the year 1927 would be renewed according to seniority of membership, after a severe revision of the moral and political past of every member; that there would be admitted to the Party all the *Avanguardisti*, regularly members of the organisation, who had attained the age of eighteen; and that there could be admitted, on the usual request, those between eighteen and twenty-one, "having the necessary qualifications." The young men who had now attained eighteen years of age had been under the Fascist system since the age of thirteen. Thus was commenced the formal linking of the recruitment of the Party

with the Youth Organisations. At this time the number of *Avanguardisti* was a little over a quarter of a million, and of the stage below them, the Balilla, something less than a half a million. We shall later see how rapidly these numbers increased, to form the great and ever-replenishing reservoir of recruits to the Party. Up to 1930, the *Avanguardisti* were admitted at eighteen ; from 1930 onwards a new organisation, the Young Fascists, was established, to nurture those who passed into it from the *Avanguardisti*, in which they remained till twenty-one, when they passed into the Party.

The Party remained closed to ordinary admissions until October 1932, the tenth anniversary of the March on Rome, while the work of revision and purification went on. Then, as a kind of grace, the registers were opened for several months. There was a large and very speedy rush to join. Something like a million applications were made, and after months of sorting out about half a million were accepted. Some, whose past made it impossible for them to be admitted, were privately told to apply nevertheless, since the record of their application would assure them of the good graces of the Party. The Secretary of the Party, Starace, observed that an act of benevolence was intended, to reward all those who by unequivocal proofs, often not solicited, had given a secure guarantee of their complete adhesion to the régime. In his Circular to the Party, he urged that those must be excluded who doubted, and those who followed, supported, or in any way encouraged movements hostile to the régime, especially during the infamous Matteotti and Aventine period. The present Vice-Secretary of the Party, Arturo Marpicati, explains that " the Duce wished the re-opening of the registers, not so much for the lingerers as for the convinced ; not so much from need of reinforcements, as for necessities of manœuvring ; not so much for the solicitation of agreement, as for a larger participation of ability ; not so much and not only to avoid conventicles and closed confraternities, as, and above all, to give the Party ample circulation of life, with the popular devotion of all worthy men to the reality of Fascism. The Fascist Party is also a mass party."[1]

Henceforward, new blood was to enter the Party only through

[1] *Almanacco della Scuola Fascista*, 1934.

the Youth Organisations. As refusal to enter these would be regarded as a direct declaration of hostility to the Fascist authorities, the Fascist State is assured of a regular annual supply of young recruits. The leaders are sure, however, only of acquiescence; of passion, loyalty and creative service they are not at all sure.

Controversy on the "Closed" and "Open" Party.

This decision, and the continuing injunctions about purifications of the Party, have aroused keen controversy, the arguments in which are of great interest and no little amusement to the foreigner, and not seldom even to Italians. Broadly there are two schools, which we may call the Generous and the Jealous. The Generous Fascists argue that the régime is now well-established and cannot be overturned, and that therefore there is nothing to fear in admitting all who seriously wish to be members. They observe that the Duce himself uttered the slogan "go out towards the people," and urged the Party to make Italy Fascist. They must destroy any notion that the Party is a caste. This will not only have a good effect upon the country in general, but it will also have a necessary and healthy effect on the mentality of the leaders, and the vainer among the rank and file, who are wont to flaunt their shirts, badges, and membership-tickets, if not their real services, in the faces of their non-Fascist fellow countrymen. If, then, it is unnecessary to reject friends, it is unnecessary to make enemies. If the people are excluded by rigorous selection, what becomes of the high argument that the intention of the Fascist régime is to teach people to govern themselves by a cautious association with politics through the Fascist Party?

It is also a part of the Fascist creed and organisation that the Party is not merely an instrument of the continuing revolution and the education of the younger generation, but that it should be consciously used as an instrument for the selection and training of the middle-aged and young for the government of the country. Any restriction of the numbers qualified for such a choice diminishes the competitive element which the existing office-holders have to meet, and deprives Italy, and not merely the Party, of capable men. If the local secretaries are left to pick and choose, these possess the power to pass a

severe sentence of economic loss, since livelihood is seriously affected by membership or otherwise of the Party. Finally, admitting that it is necessary to be strict, some critics ask : " If all were to get their deserts, who would remain in the Fascist Party excepting Mussolini himself ? " It is clear that a serious difficulty is the decentralisation of the power of revising the registers, for this means that there may be roughly 100 variations in the application of the rules approved by the Grand Council and the consequent injunctions of the Secretary of the Party.

The Jealous school bases its argument on the necessity for a fervent, passionate, fanatical body of men and women to support and continue the régime. By their nature, the number of fanatics in a country is not large ; but only the fanatical element has the spiritual power to support the leaders, and the temper and tone to understand and the faith to follow them. It is not natural to expect large numbers to agree upon a body of truth ; the larger the number the more the exceptions and qualifications. The revolution is by no means over. At a sign that there were possibilities of effective dissent, there would be many overt dissenters. The group of the genuinely convinced is necessarily small. And if it is kept small, the little minority will the more feel itself to be the exception, the chosen, the desperate, and the more devoted to the monopoly of rights and duties assigned to it. Even when the Party had reached the million stage, apart from the youngsters who had entered, there were already too many opportunist renegades, unteachables, who, as soon as they got their membership cards, went so far as to forget themselves and imagine that they could express themselves in café discussions as freely as the " veterans " of the Party who really understand Fascism ! A good example of the mind of the intransigent " veterans " is the diatribe of Bruno Sampanato in his *Democrazia Fascista.* He regards Fascism as a democratic revolution and is a bitter critic of the later entrants. He says :

" The problem is those citizens who, having abandoned all practical activity in the national life, for very, very many years have exercised themselves in speculation as arid, as difficult, always distant from the Nation. They have lost all political sensibility,

every responsibility of struggle; they are instinctively reactionary and conservative, because they are afraid that every breath of wind will discomfit their consumptive ideas diligently put together in long years of erudition and study. Hostile to any renewal, almost physically bound to the lot of the old régime, they did not accept the war and the revolution, ignoring Vittorio Veneto and October 1922. Their entrance into the Party when it occurred, was guarded and circumspect. They entered with all their baggage, and renounced nothing. The ingenuous tolerance of the Revolution left them undisturbed for ten years, nor at the beginning of the eleventh does there appear to be close at hand an academic St. Bartholomew's Night for these solemn and grave numskulls who move about dragging their steps from library to library, singing psalms to old doctrines and old speeches as though Italy had not made war for four years desperately and bloodily, and as though fourteen years of Fascism did not require them to-day to say to the world different words with different voices. They are in the Universities, schools, in the scientific institutes, newspapers, reviews, in the so-called intellectual circles. Let no one tell us that totalitarian politics and the exigencies of a State founded on the consent of all Italians justify the survival of anti-Fascist intellectuals. No régime, especially a totalitarian régime, can consent to having its own everyday sources of moral and political life poisoned. . . . Tell us, oh Leaders of good sense! tell us, please, how is it possible to change by authority the brain in the skull of men, and how can we ever peacefully allow the new generations to be educated and formed by these who appear to-day to be the only ones responsible for the Italian situation put right by the March on Rome? If it is objected that ours is simply a polemical entertainment, we reply that it is perilous to consider it so after ten years of experience of the régime."[1]

Some of these upstarts were actual enemies of the régime, who would as lief knife it as follow it! There are already far too many cold analysts. What was needed was passion, and only the early *élite* could provide it. None could understand youth so well as these early entrants. Finally, it was monstrous that the positions of authority in the Party, in other words jobs, should go to recent entrants! They ought to have a considerable novitiate and be permitted to take over responsibilities only after thorough probation. Otherwise the early generation of Fascists, who had given their energies to the

[1] Op. cit., pp. 196 ff.

movement when it was on trial, would have to go into the ranks while the new entrants commanded them.

Now the Generous school tends to agree with the Jealous school on one important matter—to restrict office to those who came into the Party early. Article 6 of the Constitution lays it down that positions of command and office must be confided only to Black Shirts, who fought or worked for the Revolution, or to Fascists who issue from the Youth Organisations. This is quite clear and peremptory. Its fulfilment is jealously watched by the higher authorities; and it is difficult to evade, since there are so many aspirants for jobs who have emerged from the privileged classes. This, as some Fascists have not been afraid to observe, is not entirely to the good of the country or even of the Fascist State narrowly conceived, since many are qualified for office by this rule who are not as good Fascists, morally and intellectually, as later entrants into the Party. Men may just as well join a Party because in its early stages its real nature is not yet formed, as stay out of it to enter later because they are sensitive, intelligent, and well-informed. The Party would do well to relax the rule of seniority or juvenility. As Mussolini has said in regard to the age of electors, chronology is not a principle of efficiency. Yet the suspicion of ingratitude is likely to alienate blind supporters, who are especially valuable in a dictatorial system.

Numbers. As the result of the various forces indicated, the adult male members of the Fascist Party numbered 1,850,000 on October 28th, 1934.[1] The other forces of the Party consisted of:

University Fascist Groups	66,934
Young Fascists (18–21)	657,613
Women Fascists	304,313
Fascist Girls	83,053
Fascist Association of the Schools:	
Elementary	100,581
Secondary	24,305
University Professors	2,568
University Assistants	2,099

[1] Official announcement by Party Headquarters.

Arts and Libraries	1,351
Fascist Associations :	
Civil Servants	230,760
Railwaymen	125,386
Post Telephones, Telegraphs	74,859
State Enterprises	70,890
Retired Officers	151,491
Dopolavoro	2,108,227
Naval League	41,827
Olympies	612,559 (1933)

Of course, many people are members of two or more organisations, Party and Civil Service Association, for example ; while enormous numbers are members of the Dopolavoro, but not members of the Party.

What does the 1,850,000 Mean? We wish only to examine the composition of the truly imposing number of 1,850,000. This is the nucleus of the Fascist régime. (Nearly two million citizens in a total voting electorate of some ten million are regularly-initiated members of the one Party. No single party in any democratic State can boast this formidable display of loyalty.) What does it mean ? Not all the members, as the Party organisers know only too well, can be considered valuable, energetic centres of sincere Fascism. Something less than one million must be young men between the ages of twenty-one and twenty-seven, who have been drafted into the Party from the Youth Organisations. This entrance into the Party is almost as automatic as the registration of births and deaths. It is true that the convention is maintained that acceptance into the Party is a selective process, and a reward for good behaviour in the Youth Organisations and at school. Yet very little selection at all is done. Only in the most extreme cases of criminality and seditious behaviour is the membership card withheld. Not the weakest but the strongest offspring is exposed in the Fascist State. Those who have entered have been through the Fascist educational mill. They are as Fascist in obedience, and almost as Fascist in mind, as any Dictator could wish for.

One more implication is obvious. Since nearly *all* the youth of twenty-one (as from 1934 some 400,000 per year) now goes

into the Party, the annual contingent is predominantly working-class. These consequences are interesting. The old class differentiation is being slightly eased, though by no means abolished, as blind Fascists pretend. In the course of time, the Party is bound to become overwhelmingly working-class. The upper and middle classes can only preserve their present predominance by entering the middle and top ranks of the Party hierarchy from the University Groups and through influence and wealth. Then the class struggle will re-arise within the Party for control of the Party and the making of its policy, unless the propertied members yield their wealth to the community because they are Fascists, and the masses yield their labour and loyalty to the community because they are Fascists. At the present moment the upper and middle classes firmly hold the reins.

The Upper and Middle Class Dominate. The other 900,000 of the membership of the Party is predominantly middle and upper class. Some 250,000, I suppose, of these are genuine industrial and agricultural workers. The large proportion of middle and upper class is not surprising, for Italy, as we have already shown, has a very large proportion of middle-class groups —independent artisans, shopkeepers, merchants small workshops, agricultural property owners, clergy and Civil Servants (including teachers).

Why People join the Party. Why are they in the Party? Firstly, all the political privileges which attract the political types are possessed by the Party—all the rights to speak, write, to influence and command others, to order what shall be done for the public welfare. Then there are all the facilities for securing private gains by using the political machine, the local institutions, the central departments, and the economic "Corporations" and committees. Thirdly, all cultural activities, sport, scholarships, charitable assistance, all branches of life, are at some point or another in control of the Party. It is better to be in than out. Fourthly, the professions are not exercisable without evidence of "good political conduct," which, if it does not compel membership of the Party at least makes it advisable. The total of all professions in Italy is about half a million, so

that there is a large constituency for recruitment to the Party. Fifthly, many thousands of Italians have an intense admiration for the Duce as a person. Sixthly, certain policies have been of direct economic benefit to certain groups—between 1926 and 1931, for example, the middle-class creditors holding private and public stock were immensely enriched by the deflation of the currency. The expenditure of public money on land reclamation, land drainage, improvement of fertility and technique, has benefited the landowners. Some working-class groups have been favoured by the protection of their industries—metals and machinery, sugar production. There is a *rotation* of benefits. We describe these more amply below.

Spoils. Finally, Fascism has all the "spoils" of office. Corrupt or infantile democracies first showed what a strong cohesive force is supplied by the gift of jobs paid for by the taxpayers. The craving for jobs, as distinct from office, is still a part of the motive for political loyalty, even in the best organised democracies, and political parties must offer material rewards to their followers, most of whom are average sensual men. This holds good for the Fascist State and Party also, and the squabbles of the members about the distribution of spoils has made this so clear that no one can mistake it. What has the Party to offer? Everything. There are:

Ministerial Posts (including minor posts)	30	(but Mussolini holds 6)
Parliamentary seats	400	
Senators	450	
Secretary of the Party	1	
Directorate	5	
Federal Secretaries	93	
Provincial Directorates	700	
Staff of Headquarters and Provinces	Hundreds	
Local Fasci	7,000	+
Fasci Directorates	35,000	+
Civil Service Local Government Service	900,000	
Podestà and Vice-Podestà	14,000	
Prefects	93	

Prefectorial Councils (Rettorato and Giunta)	1,600	
Association of Employers and Employed; Provincial Associations of Professionals and Artists	1,809[1]	centres each employing several people
Fascist Militia Officers	37,000	
Permanent Service of Militia	8,000	
Militia of State Services	12,000	
Institutes Part-State, Part-Voluntary	Some thousands	

Most of these jobs carry a regular salary with them; very few are entirely honorary; the Podestà and the Prefects as a principle, receive no pay, but may receive compensation if they need it. The strictly Party officers are paid out of Party funds; and job-holders of quasi-State employment who need payment are also paid from this source, or from the funds of their associations.

Hence the Fascist Party is assured of several hundreds of thousands of steady supporters, organisers and propagandists. If the régime collapsed, their jobs and prestige would be in jeopardy. They are cemented under it by alternate hopes and fears. There are many more aspiring to their places.

Party Funds and Charitable Assistance. Where does the Party obtain its funds? Its normal source of income is the payment of 5 lire (1*s.* 8*d.*) for the membership card and badge of the Party, plus an annual subscription. The annual subscription varies in amount according to the year in which the member joined—the earlier (showing greater faith), the lower the fee. It ranges between 5*s.* and 15*s.* per year. Further, the local Secretary, in consultation with the Federal Secretary, taxes members "according to their means." From time to time, there is a levy of 1 per cent on the income of all members of the Party. The rich are made to pay heavily, and frequently divert their usual charitable gifts into the coffers of the Party. They must pay what they are taxed to pay. Their means are quite well-known to the Party Secretary. Refusals or evasions may be, and have

[1] *Legislazione e Ordinamento sindicale corporativa* (Istituto Nazionale Fascista di Cultura), p. 421.

been, followed by expulsion from the Party. Furthermore, well-off farmers are obliged to offer gifts in produce ; and employers, agricultural and others, are forced to employ a certain number of workers, of course at lower than the legal contract prices. The probable income from regular subscriptions is in the neighbourhood of one million pounds per year. The special contributions made for the charitable assistance work of the Party must have amounted in the year 1933 to about 140 million lire,[1] since nearly eight million lire was distributed in money, over one and a quarter million in medicaments, nearly 120 million in cooked and raw food, and there were besides distributions of milk, coal, wood, and other forms of assistance. This money comes from the wealthier members of the Party, and is also obtained from the various professional, industrial and commercial associations. The Party, of course, indicates unmistakably that the money is needed, and then, as though of their own spontaneous charity, a deputation from a group of contributors arrives at the Party Headquarters and makes the gift. The gifts in money and in kind are administered under the direction of the Office for Charitable Assistance of the Party, and through the provincial and local offices in which the Women Fascists play the principal part assigned to them in the life of the régime. Naturally the work is not carried out on the principle of not letting your right hand know what the left is doing. The Press is full of the philanthropic work of the Party. Foremost in the advertisement, of course, is the Duce. Indeed, he is represented as the personal recipient of all contributions, and the personal donor of so much to this city and so much to that.

[1] Nearly £3,000,000, at the rate of 60 lire to the £.

Chapter XIV

THE FASCIST PARTY: MORALE

Fascist Morality. We now turn to a consideration of the behaviour expected of Fascists. The Constitution of 1932 says :

> " The Fascist who does less than his duty by indiscipline, or deficiency in the qualities which constitute the spirit traditionally Fascist, must be . . ."

punished by the disciplinary authorities. What then is expected of a good Fascist member ? What is the " traditional Fascist spirit " ? The Constitution does not contain a summary account of ethics and mentality. It imposes certain specific duties, such as dress, appearance at certain ceremonials, singing certain songs, carrying banners, payment of subscription, the taking of an oath. The last mentioned is fundamental, for with the oath of allegiance the member commits himself to obeying the orders of the Duce, and this would appear to imply the hierarchy who run the Party at the orders of the Duce.

The Oath. The form of the oath is interesting. It runs :

> " In the name of God and of Italy, I swear to execute the orders of the Duce and to serve with all my powers, and, if necessary, with my blood, the cause of the Fascist Revolution."

Until 1926 there was no general form of oath. Whatever undertakings there were, took the form prescribed by the local leaders, such oaths being especially commanded in January 1923. The alterations in the oath between 1926 and 1932 are of interest. Even in the Constitution of 1929 the first part of the oath ran : " I swear to execute *without discussion*, etc., etc." That is to say since 1932, the oath has been strengthened in appeal, by the inclusion of the religious sanction, " God," and the nationalist

sanction, " Italy." Were it not for fear of blasphemy we should be inclined to say that this form of the oath makes adherence to the Duce more constitutional ; at any rate, it is a little less personal. That is by no means the most important amendment : of remarkable significance is the silent omission of the words, " without discussion." I have seen no discussion of this amendment, and I cannot find out who was the author. Those words were essential when the oath was in effect the oath of a revolutionary *army* ; and they were not inappropriate while the national leaders were anxiously fighting to bring the local leaders and rank and file under control. As a matter of fact, in his Grand Report of 1929, Mussolini himself was looking to the need of criticism. We have already quoted his remarks on *honest* criticism. He asks :

" Does this (Dictatorship) mean to be hermetically sealed in every pore through which dissent and criticism might filter ? Not at all. The fundamental ideas of the Revolution are one thing which need not be discussed, and if discussed, should be treated with extreme discretion and in the proper place, as has happened since 1922, and it is another thing to criticise the administration and services of the State. The world will not collapse, and still less the régime, if the great Departments of the State and the local perical authorities are, as has already happened, made the objects of discussion and criticism by competent people."

The Amendment shows the sense of security of the régime. Frederick the Great and Adam Smith long ago pointed out that toleration was not seldom the product of standing armies. Those who are quite sure of the hands behind the machine guns can well afford to be tolerant to the voices in front of them. The amendment is, however, as much the product of Mussolini's own native elasticity of mind and approval of free speech. Do not let me be misunderstood. Of course he is Dictator, and if the emergency arose he would have no hesitation in ordering the guns to fire, with or without the King's signature of the decree of martial law. But it is of considerable moment to the welfare of the State whether the members of the dominant party are terrified into silence, as in Russia, or whether they have a certain latitude to speak their minds, as in Italy.

One more observation is material. As we show later, a conflict between the Church and the Party broke out in 1931. The Pope issued a remarkable Encyclical, in which he condemned "Statolatry," and, ostensibly replying to Catholic anxieties about the Fascist oath, recommended them to take it (seeing that it was "for countless persons a necessary condition of their daily bread, and even of life itself"), but to make a reservation in their own consciences, such as saving the laws of God and the Church.

Perhaps this was why "without discussion" disappeared from the oath, and "before God" was inserted; and why Mussolini prayed in St. Peter's on February 11th, 1932. The conflict, in fact, caused thousands of Catholics to resign from the Party, and thousands more to be expelled.

Obedience to the Duce. At any rate, the first element of the behaviour of a Fascist is to obey the Duce, and if necessary, to fight for the cause of the Revolution, which again means obeying the Duce. Hence any of the Duce's allocutions and recommendations form part of the ethics of a good Fascist. Therein lies the importance of the inclusion of the Duce's *Essay on the Social and Political Doctrines of Fascism* in the Constitution of the Party. The good Fascist is committed to all that, though not without discussion. The day-by-day utterance of the Duce also enters into the realm of duties of the good Fascist. Such, for example, is the Duce's recommendations regarding the behaviour of Fascist office-holders, given in July 1933 in the form of an autograph to one of the Federal Secretaries.

"1. Not to frequent at daytime and still less at night resorts in the fashionable parts of the city, restaurants, theatres, etc.

"2. To go about as much as possible on foot, and when it is unavoidable to take an ordinary motor-car; and better still to go by motor-cycle.

"3. In official ceremonies no top hats, but only the simple Black Shirt of the Revolution;

"4. Not to change your usual habits and system of living in any way;

"5. Keep your office hours rigorously, and listen to the maximum number of persons, with the greatest patience and humanity.

" 6. Mix with young workmen, and go, not merely morally, but physically, among the people, especially in these times of difficulty."

All these recommendations throw a light on the real state of affairs in Italy under the Dictatorship, show how slow human nature is to change, no matter how tyrannical and bloody a revolution may be, and demonstrate how much better are Mussolini's precepts than Fascism. The Secretary of the Party had these dicta affixed in all the offices of the Party, " to be obeyed by all, chiefs as well as subordinates." And a leading periodical commented :

" The rules are lapidary ; most opportune is the expression which the Party has given them, refreshing in the most distant cells the notion and conscience of duties which are incumbent upon its Fascist leaders of all grades."[1]

Thus the ethics of Fascism are to be sought in a number of scattered sources, and in the conventions that have come to be accepted as the result of experience, as for example to give all the aid possible to the charitable work of the Party, or to reduce prices in accordance with orders given by the Government.

For special groups there are special duties. Let us examine one example. It is a voluntary act on the part of teachers to join the Fascist Association of Teachers, unless they are members of the Fascist Party, when membership is obligatory. They then come under the general Rules relating to Fascist Associations. Entrance into the Association pre-supposes and implies full and unconditional adhesion to the régime, " Fascist Associations cultivate the formation of a Fascist conscience in their members." So in general. For the Teachers in particular there are these specific duties :

" To promote an ever more conscious and fervid participation of teachers and academic officials in the political life of the régime . . . to bring to the attention of the Minister of Education whatever concerns the improvement of the regulations and scholastic services and to collaborate with the institutions of the régime to the end of a more integral Fascist education of youth."

[1] *Critica Fascista*, about that date.

Besides this there are also the ordinary professional purposes of the Association. The Association consists of various Sections each representing the general grades of education from the Universities to the Elementary Schools and the Libraries. They are the special instruments of the régime for the infiltration of the Fascist idea into the minds of the whole school-going part of the population, from the earliest years to the University.

Punishment and Discipline. It early became apparent that special arrangements must be made to secure a regular process of punishment and trial for the doubtful elements in the Party, and this became especially necessary when the leaders wished to build up a reign of law within the State to which the Party would be loyal, and a reign of law within the Party, expelling personal motives of revenge, ambition and cupidity. All this became the more urgent as membership and good standing in the Party formed a passport indispensable to entry into, and success in, the professions, industry, sport, and public life. The Constitution of 1932, enumerates various penalties, and the steps of the disciplinary process from first instance to final appeal, but does not define the offences which match the penalties. These are to be found only in the written and oral instructions of the Party Headquarters to the Federal Secretaries and Directorates. The Constitution only contains the general declaration that the Fascist is liable to disciplinary action "when he falls short of his duty, by indiscipline or deficiencies of the qualities which constitute the traditional Fascist spirit."

Offences. A fairly representative list of offences which I have collected includes: mockery of officials; slackness in paying dues; not saluting officials as prescribed; non-attendance and misbehaviour at meetings; not showing proper energy at and during elections; spreading tittle-tattle about the Party; suspicious friendship with non-Fascists[1] showing no great

[1] Cf. Fossa, *Vita Fascista Provinciale*, 1933: "Stop the ingenuous, even stupid, assertions that are sometimes heard, 'He is not a Fascist, but he is decent sort, even a gentleman'! If a man is not a Fascist, he cannot be a decent fellow or a gentleman—naturally from the moral and political point of view."

enthusiasm in sending children to the Fascist Youth organisations ; grumbling and grousing about the policy and administration of the Government ; not obeying with alacrity and good example the decrees of the authorities ; withholding information, or giving false information, to the Party officials, especially where new members or one's own property and income are concerned ; malversation of funds ; employers not obeying the imposition of labour, to diminish unemployment ; employees not accepting lower than the contract pay when their employment has been forced on the employer ; not subscribing " according to means " to Fascist charitable funds ; sending anonymous letters " for the public good," but doubting the efficiency of this or that official or of the Government's measures in general ; " vociferators " of all sorts, but from time to time defined by special orders of the Secretary of the Party, as for example, in September and December 1934, " vociferators " about the weakness of the lira and the flight of currency from the country ; not wearing the Party badge permanently ; giving the Fascist cheer to nobodies as a joke ; blaspheming by using the Duce's name in vain ; utilising the *Casa del Fascio* as a drinking-club and card-room ; quarrelsome temper and insults ; singing the Fascist hymns with unauthorised and *even bawdy, scurrilous and derisive interpolations*, and inventing choruses which subtly mock the authorities ; inventing and circulating seditious puns about the Party[1] ; chalking up remarks on the walls and pavements belauding one Party official, and expressing contempt, in no uncertain or gentlemanly phrases, for another, regardless of the rank in which these have been put by the Government. There is no need to dwell on the fact that each of these offences may pass from a venial to a capital sin ; it depends on the circumstances.

The punishments are : (1) admonition ; (2) suspension for a

[1] Such as these (*a*) " Where can one eat best in this town ? "—" At the Party Headquarters ! " (*b*) " Have you heard ? So-and-so's horse can't eat ! What can we do ? "—" Send him to be trained at the Party Headquarters ! " (*c*) " At what holidays does one eat best ?—*Pasqua, Natale, Ferragosto* (Easter, Christmas and Mid-August), where the first letters P.N.F. make the initials of the Fascist National Party. These depend on the verb *mangiare*, to eat, which also means " to batten corruptly on . . . " (*d*) " How can you test the strength of a new bridge ? "—" Fill a lorry with Fascist Officials, and if the bridge stands this, it is a good bridge ; if not, it is a better bridge." (*e*) " An intelligent honest Fascist cannot exist ! "—" Why not ? "—" Because if intelligent, he can't be honest, if honest he can't be intelligent, and if both he can't be Fascist ! "

determinate time (from a month up to a year); (3) suspension for an indeterminate time; (4) withdrawal of membership card; (5) expulsion from the Party.

The first three punishments are inflicted for "misbehaviour which does not exclude repentance and amendment." No difference is made between the first and the second and third. Suspension (Article 23) involves the obligation to abstain from any political activity, and not to avail oneself of any right which derives from being a Fascist. He must surrender his card and badge. He is suspended from all jobs or responsibilities, *unless otherwise determined.* Fascists subject to criminal proceedings for crimes damaging to honour are suspended pending judgement. The Fascist who is involved in grave misbehaviour, or shows that he does not possess the qualities "traditionally Fascist," can be dealt with by the withdrawal of his *tessera.* This does not mean expulsion from the Party. But it is next door to it, and for the retrieval of the card a deliberate process of self-justification supported by evidence is necessary—as the Constitution says, to "render himself worthy of readmission." Also withdrawal of the membership card involves the loss of all Fascist privileges, and in this case there is no choice but to lay down all Party offices or responsibilities.

Finally, expulsion from the Party can be inflicted on the "betrayers of the Cause of the Revolution and on those who have been condemned for infamous crimes." This might mean confinement on the Islands, as in the case of Arpinati in 1934.[1] Expulsion from the Party is a serious infliction, for it is nothing less than being banned from public life, which means that any branch of activity which is in any way within the official or semi-official control or cognisance of the Party or the State is forbidden. It also means that wherever the culprit's calling is liable to regulation by the authorities, Party and State officials will be unhelpful.

[1] He was one of the founders of Fascism in Bologna, indeed, one of those who several times only narrowly escaped death on behalf of the Cause of the Revolution; he later became Under-Secretary of State for the Interior, was one-time Vice-Secretary of the Fascist Party. But he fell into error in supporting the candidacy for the Party of someone who was unworthy of it, and then for leading a small group of friends into disobedience and mockery of Starace, the Secretary of the Party. The friends of Arpinati were expelled from the Party, and Arpinati condemned to the *confino.*

Machinery of Discipline. How are these rules implemented ? Now it must be remembered that a process of informal admonition, rebuke, insinuated threat (and I have heard of cases of castigation also), is always going on in the local Fasci. The first *formal* disciplinary instance is the Provincial authority. There is a Federal Commission of Discipline, appointed by the Federal Secretary, of five members from outside the Federal Directory, so as not to confuse the political and administrative branch of the Party with its judicial function. The Federal Vice-Secretary is president. This commission has the full power to inflict the first three punishments enumerated. When the results of the discussion before the Federal Disciplinary Commission lead to the final two punishments the documents must be sent to the Federal Secretary, who, when he thinks that expulsion from the Party is in question, proposes this to the Secretary of the Party himself, who is the only authority able to expel, either at his own initiative, or on proposals from the Federal Secretaries. Hence the first three punishments are inflicted by the Federal Disciplinary Commission ; the fourth by the Federal Secretary ; the fifth by the Secretary of the Party.

Above these Federal authorities there is the National Court of Discipline, presided over by a Vice-Secretary of the Party, and including two members of the National Directorate and a secretary, all nominated from time to time by the Secretary of the Party. The Court occupies itself only with the cases that the Secretary of the Party considers worthy of its particular examination, and its conclusions are submitted to the Secretary of the Party for his decision. Thus the cases which seem to call for expulsion are sent to the Secretary, who turns them over to the Court for its report. Further, there is an appeal from the Federal Secretary in relation to the fourth punishment, withdrawal of the membership card, to the Secretary of the Party. There is a final appeal against expulsion from the Party, not on grounds of the rules under which the case has been judged or reasonableness of the sentence, but on grounds of error resulting from new facts or new evidence, and only at the orders of the Duce. The appeal court is again the Secretary himself and the Court of Discipline. The Federal Secretary is a Court of Appeal for the Federal Disciplinary Commission.

Decisions must be recorded in the personal records of the culprit together with the grounds of the decision, and its ultimate cessation or revocation. No one may be prosecuted or punished without confrontation with the evidence and opportunities of self-defence. Special arrangements must, of course, be made where the members of the Party hold situations in the Government. They cannot be proceeded against until they have left their situations, otherwise there might be trouble between Party officials with the disciplinary power in their hands and the Government officials who may have to command or offend these in the conscientious discharge of their State duties. There is, therefore, a line of communication opened between the local Party authorities through the Secretary of the Party and so to the Government regarding the desirable course of action to be taken against the office-holder. And the Government can deal with these obnoxious people if they prove to be in the wrong, because the Decree on the Civil Service of 1923 enables it peremptorily to dismiss any Civil Servant " when it judges the measure necessary in the interests of the service," and by the law of December 24th, 1925, it may dismiss those who " do not give complete guarantees respecting the faithful accomplishment of their duties."

Senators and Deputies can only be punished by the Secretary of the Party. When members of the Militia or the directors of the Balilla or Trade Unions or Co-operative organisations become subject to disciplinary proceedings, an officer or representative of the organisation in question must be called to take part in the proceedings. Further measures have to be taken by the Militia against any of its members who get into trouble.

Value of Arrangements. Like all disciplinary rules, those of the Fascist Party regulate external action or speech rather than the conscience. While the Fascist officials are vigilant, they cannot very well be punitive on a wholesale basis for if they were there would be grave unrest throughout the Party, which, after all, is composed of " average sensual men." Moreover what, precisely, is required is not very well known. The Spanish Inquisition itself had to teach the Catechism in order to make a clear distinction between the faithful and the heretics. Even then it was unsuccessful. Nor was its test of ancestry and

pureness of blood a test of *faith*. A doctrine of the State, or a religious creed, is neither so clearly definable nor so automatically testable as the rule that " alcoholic liquor " means liquor with 2·5 per cent of alcohol in it. All that can be said then is this, that the minimum of outward obedience is rendered ; and the possibility of expulsion is always there. Beyond this, only those with an innate passion for the Fascist view of life *contribute* their consciences, and they do not do this because there are disciplinary punishments in the background but from inward compulsion. The Federal Secretaries do not want local scandals ; they have other work to do. They will not be rewarded according to the number of people they punish. On the contrary, they may become so *notorious* that the régime will want to withdraw them from their too zealous activities. These punishments serve, then, only to keep incoherent murmurs from becoming loud blasts ; they serve to maintain the numbers at local meetings, and to secure a small minimum of conformity. They are a threat to the destroyers.

Nourishment rather than Punishment. In fact, the Party relies rather upon positive than retaliatory means to maintain the morale of the Party, and it shows a remarkable comprehension of Italian human nature.

The Orders of the Day (*Foglio d'Ordini*) issued by the Party Headquarters—let the military character of the phrase be noted !—and Circulars and Dispositions occupy themselves with laws and orders of the Government, which require the ready obedience of the people. The Party officials and the rank and file are adjured not only to obey and set an example, but to bring pressure to bear upon others and upon each other, by requests to denounce offenders. Let us take some examples.

Hardly had the Cabinet which decreed the reduction of salaries and rents on April 14th, 1934, terminated, when the Secretary of the Party sent this telegram to all the Federal Secretaries.

" The Cabinet by to-day's provisions intends to scale down the national economic life in the relationship of approximately one in three. The measures adopted must have a rigid and complete application. The leaders and the Black Shirts will be vigilant to stop

evasions of any kind on the part of anybody, including consumers, and frightened or accommodating tenants, whenever they tolerate misdeeds without denouncing them. Culprits must be immediately denounced to me, to whom I give this warning from now, that I will inflict expulsion, because I shall consider them responsible for having attempted to sabotage the laws which aim at intensifying productive recovery and to accelerate the economic and financial settlement of the Fascist State."

On January 19th, 1930, the Order Sheet contained this brilliant addition to political science : The only proper way to deal with those who criticised the Government was " to quell, if necessary, by a box on the ear, the useless and hateful vociferations of the empty-headed, the ignorant, the defeatists, in short, anti-Fascists. This course will be pursued on an ample scale and according to orders given." Carefully drawn orders are circulated regarding the organisation of Winter Help to the Unemployed (November 30th, 1934) :

" For the discovery of the needy it is necessary to perfect the capillary organisms, and to nominate for each sector, nucleus, and possibly for each street, a woman visitor who may be able to know personally the condition of needy families. In this way, we can go directly out towards the really necessitous, who sometimes hide away, and avoid the crowd of the clamorous, not always meritorious, at the headquarters of the Fasci or Groups."

During the year 1934, the economic situation, especially the currency problem, was very anxious. Gold left the country in dangerous quantities. People began to mutter *in the Italian style.* Although some years ago the Duce had gallantly affirmed that the people were entitled to *jus murmurandi*, the Party replied, first by an unsigned article in the *Popolo d'Italia* entitled *Ballast* (to be thrown overboard), probably written by Mussolini, and then by this order (December 14th, 1934) :

" I lay it down that such a policy consists of the immediate elimination from the ranks of the Party, with the sanction of withdrawal of the membership-card when there is not yet ground for the extreme of actual expulsion, of vociferators who, affected by intermittent cretinism and absolutely incurable idiocy, have the courage, or rather the effrontery, to wear the Fascist badge and yet constitute rubbish which should be thrown overboard like ballast."

Again one of the outcrops of the régime, the numerous meetings, too often, according to Party Headquarters, merely an occasion for wearing top-hats and getting photographed, are thus regulated.

In their turn the Federal Secretaries issue Circulars or verbal recommendation, as, for example, the order to wear Black Shirts on the solemn occasion of appearance for examination for the doctorate at the University.

Meetings. The prescribed annual, or semi-annual, meetings of the local and the Federal Fasci are occasions when the passional, rather than the intellectual, aspects of Fascism are cultivated. The meetings prescribed are supposed, in the first place, to serve the end of a discussion, in which free intervention is possible. In some places this actually occurs ; and, in discussion, useful hints are given about the state of mind of the population, and suggestions of some value regarding policy as well as propaganda are made. In the majority of cases, despite the declaration of the régime that it seeks the political tuition of the people, there is nothing but a demonstration of loyalty to Mussolini, founded on nothing more than a dim surmise about his own character and hardly connected with the policy pursued by the Government for the nation, or by the Party authorities for the locality. The banners are brought out, the uniforms are donned, hymns are sung, and local personages arrive in a mood of worship or good fellowship rather than self-examination. There is a great deal of laughing and banter. There is no reason, in fact, why the local leaders should treat the rank-and-file as anything but a herd, to be dictated to, or humbugged with a spate of high-sounding nonsense. Those who perpetrate these pieces of classic eloquence often believe almost every word they say. Their genuine attachment to Mussolini, coupled with their own incapacity to formulate ideas other than those sponsored by the leaders of the régime and the extreme personal danger of any real criticism, puts them into a high state of excited conviction which makes contradiction a crime against the State. In any case, they are the authorities. The Duce is always right, and they are the interpreters of the Duce's words. Who will dare say anything in derogation of their truth, or propose

radical courses of improvement? Sometimes a local leader will admit difficulties frankly, but only to defend them by lines of argument which end in the need "to have Faith in the Duce." So the meeting, frequently held in the *piazza*, is an exercise in patriotic and loyal demonstrations. It is not a healthy sign that members of one Party, including a selected and a comparatively small proportion of the population, should have to be canvassed to attend meetings often advertised by placard.

Conformity of Local Journals. The Federal authorities, and in a few cases the larger local Fasci and the larger University Groups, publish a journal (such as *Libro e Moschetto*, in Milan), weekly or fortnightly. This is one of the ways to high office in a country where competitive public discussion is not allowed, and where entrance into journalism as a profession depends on satisfying the Syndicate of Journalists. It is necessary that the attention of the Chief or the highest ranks of the Party shall be attracted. The journals are, on the whole, poor in quality. They consist for the most part of snippets of local news, and leading articles from the national or metropolitan Press, with comments in the true spirit of the Party. A word, a remark, a motto of the Duce, a visit of the Hierarchy, a recurrent anniversary, a phrase from the *Orders of the Day*, gives the occasion for a local editorial. There is practically no originality and, from the point of view of those who wish to inculcate the ideas of a few central leaders, this is all to the good. They are assured of a circulation that percolates through to almost every household; at any rate the local chief will make a terrible fuss if his journal is not bought! (It has not been unknown for the Party in Milan to ask its members why they do not subscribe regularly to the *Popolo d'Italia*, Mussolini's newspaper, now edited by his nephew.) The local journal is also attractive to the young people who have still their way to make and who are only too happy to get the chance of seeing their names in print. This creates a bond between the writer and the Party, whence all blessings flow.

There is considerable criticism of the subservience of the local journals by those who would like to see a light shining from the provinces, a sign of creative talent among those for whom jobs

have been found by the Revolution. They observe the mediocrity of the local journalism, and the fear of being really pungent about anybody or anything. Yet it is one of the direct and fated consequences of the dictatorial system that it condemns citizens to silence unless they can conscientiously or unconscientiously praise those in power (or likely to be in power), or who have influence with such.

This spiritual conformity is an advantage to the régime as an instrument of domination, but from the point of view of the régime as *educator*, as the instrument of awakening people to live dangerously, it is despicable. A special Party Commissioner sent to Forlì to clear up the mess which the previous Secretary and Directorate had made, writing an article in the *Popolo di Romagna* (October 12th, 1931) on the Young Fascists, began, "We certainly do not write in order to surround with vain and poor words the high command of the Duce ; it would be useless and irreverent and, even, perhaps, injurious." Let the reader compare this mild beginning with any of Mussolini's controversies with the leaders of the Socialist Party, when *he* was a Party organiser in Forlì 25 years ago ! The contrast is the measure of the loss of creative fire due to a dictatorial system. Mussolini then refused to be a "perambulatory gramophone," but he has, so far as possible, made all his Party officials this. We must acknowledge that there are among Italians and Fascists, and even Fascists high in the ranks of the Party, some who openly criticise this state of affairs.

Personal Contacts. There are very frequent visits of the Federal Secretaries to Rome, to Party Headquarters or the other head offices of the régime, for advice, consultation, and report, especially, of course, in difficult cases. The régime has made a steady effort to secure that the Federal stage at least shall be a training ground for the new governing class that will be necessary when Mussolini has gone. It is true that the Secretaries often make their journey to Rome as an occasion for bringing themselves to the notice of the authorities in the hope of future promotion, that they are satisfied to chat and offer a glowing account of their Province, and then to return none the wiser to receive the congratulations of their friends. Yet it is evident that

close contact between centre and localities is extremely important to secure the circulation, not merely of the ideas of the centre, but the excitement of the adventure.

Secretaries on Circuit. In the autumn of 1934 the Party introduced two new and very interesting measures. The first is the exchange of Federal Secretaries, during their term of office, for a short period. The object is to enable them to become acquainted with the actual situation and problems of other parts of Italy, which in the ordinary event they might never know, and by discussion for a few days to learn the measures considered proper to deal with the specific differences of the Province, and also to foster the comradeship of the rising class of Governors.

Apprenticeship to Politics. Secondly, a kind of apprenticeship of people between twenty-three and twenty-five years of age has been instituted, whereby contingents are sent for a year's preparation, study, and initiation to the Federal Secretaries. They are in turn sent to large, medium-sized, and small Provinces, and work in the Party and Government organisations, the syndicates, and agricultural, industrial, and commercial firms. They are drawn from the best students at special courses of instruction lasting a year.

The Secretary of the Party's comment on these arrangements (as reported in the *Corriere della Sera,* October 2nd, 1934), is very interesting :

" Like the Army in its Military and War Schools, the professions in the University, the State in its various branches of administration, so the Party has the duty of promoting the preparation of those who will form the governors of the Fascist Nation of to-morrow. It is obvious that the selection must occur by natural aptitude. The technique of the organisation of the Party, and the organisations dependent on or in some way connected with it, is to-day so vast and complex as to demand a serious and special study. To this end special courses will be instituted, reserved for the most capable ; courses, it is worth noticing, which will not dispense anybody from his ordinary occupation, and which therefore will be held in hours accessible to all ; courses which must not give birth to the presumption of an hierarchy of power or virtue, nor make one believe even

remotely of the establishment of a sort of professional politician class which Fascism plainly abhors.[1] As the citizen prepares himself to bear arms to be ready to answer any call, so the Fascists will learn the art of Government, to be always ready, if called, to serve the Revolution with the necessary competence, and in any sector. It is a means to serve the Party of a more specifically technical character, for the preparation and formation of Fascists, to deepen the knowledge of the multiform organisations of the régime, which everybody already has, at least, in brief."

I notice that the first contingent consists entirely of men who have taken their degrees at the University, most in law, some in political science, some in commercial science, and some in engineering, chemistry, and other faculties. It is very doubtful whether more than an infinitesimal proportion originate outside the middle and upper classes.

Inspection. If the local officials are frequently in Rome, the Headquarters Staff are not seldom on tours of inspection in the localities. There are, of course, regular arrangements for audit, for visits of the members of the Directorate and their agents. During the last few years this has been supplemented by inspections without notice, for which purpose the Secretary of the Party may use any members of the Party, from Deputies to the rank-and-file. Quite frequently, a national officer walks into the offices of a local or a Federal Fascio and undertakes an enquiry into the work, the problems, the organisation, and the staff.

This system was first strongly brought to the notice of Mussolini by his brother Arnaldo, then director of the *Popolo d'Italia* in Milan, in a letter sent on September 1st, 1928, to the Secretary General of the Party. He said :

" I declare at once that we must learn from the Church of Rome and a little also from the State and its Ministry of the Interior. The Church selects its Apostolic visitors for the Dioceses, and they converse, listen, do not fall out with others, observe, and draw the attention of the proper persons to what are the dead lines at which ecclesiastical policy stops. The superior authorities who are sheltered from any vicissitude or any manœuvre of encirclement, then make

[1] But this is *exactly* what has happened !

the proper arrangements on the basis of the proven reports of the inspectors. There are, it is true, your Vice-Secretaries, splendid men whom I know, but who are bound to a very hard task, in contact with written reports, the commissions, the members of Parliament, the transient leaders. The Vice-Secretaries must remain such; they cannot move too often from Rome. The political inspector, however, arrives suddenly, without the authorities dragging on him, but with the assured viaticum of the high authorities of the Party. He looks about, observes, reports: he is sheltered from any surprise. . . . I believe and see the gravity of rumours which circulate, and they cannot be dispelled and denied except by declarations made by superior people, beyond suspicion, who have carried out with severity and Fascist conscience their task of investigation. On the whole, the Provincial authorities work well. But when they feel that they are supervised, and when they have the sensation that from one moment to the other certain situations might be inspected and punished, there will be on their side more reserve and greater discretion."

Naturally, the regular tours of inspection have some use as a method of control and inspiration, but they are too formal, too ceremonial, to be real investigations. The unannounced, unceremonial, inspections are the effective ones.

Party Prizes and Rewards. The Party offers many prizes for athletic and literary competitions. This is a most potent method of winning the hearts and the steady allegiance of the young people. The sporting events are naturally under the auspices of the Fascist sporting organisations or the University Groups, and if the prizes are the object of a young man's ambition he has to be in good standing with the organisation to be promoted as candidate, to get the opportunities for practice, money for equipment, and so on. Then there are scores of regular literary competitions, for poetry, history and essays, on themes set by the Party leaders or the University Groups, or by literary groups in close contact with the Party. They are not seldom on political themes, or at any rate are calculated to draw a contribution lauding the people, or the physical beauty, or the greatness of the history of Italy, or the moral profundity and cleverness of the policies of the present rulers. The prizes are distributed in public ceremonial attended by all the Party, municipal, and Trade Union authorities; and for

the most important of them all, the Secretary of the Party, or the Vice-Secretary, or one of the members of the Royal Academy of Italy, may preside. Naturally, the Youth Organisations are present, with their uniforms, banners, shouts, and fanfares. On very special occasions the winners of the competitions will be given a trip to Rome, there to receive their prizes, sometimes at the hands of the Duce himself.

The most momentous of these competitions are the *Littoriali*, begun in 1934. The plan for the year 1935 (April) is more elaborate. Roughly the arrangement is as follows : for six days the competitors meet for discussions. They participate, of course, only in those of their own selection. There will be, in fact, ten sections :

General Doctrine of Fascism ;
Foreign and Colonial Studies ;
Literary Criticism ;
Theatrical Criticism ;
Cinematograph Criticism ;
Musical Criticism ;
Artistic Criticism ;
Scientific Studies ;
Journalism ;
Political Organisation.

To each of these the local Party authorities, the University Groups and the Young Fascists (not over twenty-six years of age) may send competitors, *excepting that the social sciences and art are reserved to the Universities*. Competitors are selected by the organisations six months before the competitions, with the sanction of the Federal Secretary and the Secretary of the Party. (They would not let the youngsters do the whole thing by themselves !) The competitors prepare themselves, and then meet (last year in Florence, in 1935 in Rome) and discuss the themes set long previously by the Secretary of the Party. The judges of prowess and talent are chosen from the loyal professoriate and the Party bureaucracy. The Duce will be present at the inauguration in 1935 !

What is the spirit and purpose of the competition ? It is to attach the youngsters to the régime, to discover talent, and

to direct the thoughts of Italian youth along certain channels pleasing to the authorities. This is what the Secretary of the Party announced, (September 15th, 1934, *Libro e Moschetto*):

"The Littoriali were instituted to demonstrate the will to power which now leaps living and full of promise from our Athenæums. With them are renewed the public spectacles which in the second Republican period Marcus Fulvius Nobiliore instituted, and which then, at the commencement of the Imperial destinies of Rome, Augustus restored with greater magnificence. The reborn *Princeps juventutis* has willed them to be austere, Roman, and Fascist, to represent the new fashion of civil and national celebrations. The Spectacle must attest the recuperated *virtus romana* which also in its physical efforts appeared as something to be feared by its enemies.

"In the contests arranged, which call into competition young people from the Universities for the artistic and political disciplines, will be preferred those who with *concise* oratory, affirm the Roman and Fascist character of this arduous and powerful art, against the demagogic degenerations condemned to ridicule by Fascist practice.[1] We desire, thus, to reward the inspiration, the initiative, the originality, the earnestness of University Fascists, to test, in other words, the level of maturity attained."

Many of the subjects lend themselves with difficulty to political exploitation, but a selection from the list of themes will show that the leaders of the Party do not lack ingenuity.

"Italian art in relation to tradition, foreign influence, and the political exigencies of Fascism."

"Character of the Fascist Cinema."

"Comment on an extract from Mussolini on the Youth Organisations and their political importance."

"Reform of Parliament."—Theme from Mussolini's speech.

"The Corporations is the institution through which the State also enters the world of economy, hitherto alien and disordered."—Mussolini.

"From 1929 to the present Fascism from being an Italian phenomenon has become a Universal phenomenon."

"Corporative salaries."

"Defence against air attacks."

[1] We have already given some examples, and will yet give more, to show what the Fascists actually practise as verbal sobriety.

A play " inspired by an episode of the Fascist Revolution."
" Photographic documentation of Fascist life."
" Plans for a Stadium, ' inspired by the Fascist era.' "
" A Sculpture, inspired by Maternity and Infancy."

Now in spite of all the laudatory comments made by Fascist journalists about the considerable admission of *non-University* competitors, that is working-class competitors, it is perfectly obvious that the latter are at a disadvantage. They are formally excluded from the culture and art competitions. And, as in any capitalistic country, the working classes are dependent on the goodwill of the authorities to provide them with the means of a University education. Candid Fascists, on this theme, or any other, will admit that the privilege is still a middle and upper class privilege, and that there are as yet not even such scholarship ladders for poor children as are available in non-Fascist England. Socialistic Fascists suggest preparation by lectures, etc., and the institution of separate Littoriali for the working classes.

Look into the glowing eyes of the young man who has won a medal, a cup or a certificate in these competitions, and you will see that the régime has made a faithful follower for many years. How can a young man, with ambition and without extraordinary maturity of mind and independence, hope to escape from the toils which have so artfully been spun to bind him? He sees the gates of glory open for him! He is embraced by parents, teachers and party personages, in the Italian manner! His success is an addition to their prestige, and all of them will encourage him along the path of conformity, along which pass the waggons full of " spoils " and social prestige. He is lost to the world of independence. He will defend the indefensible, because he has become part of it.

Public Ceremonials and Exhibitions. The Fascist Party has made the holding of Exhibitions and Ceremonials one of the leading features of Italian life. Greatest and most splendid, hitherto, was the *Mostra della Rivoluzione Fascista* in Rome, the Exhibition of the Fascist Revolution. This was conceived

many years ago, but actually opened in 1932, the Tenth Anniversary of the Revolution. Housed under one large roof is an exhibition of the history of the years 1914–1922, from the Fascist point of view. Most cleverly planned and executed, giving impressions vivid to the point of exciting a revolt to cast them off, are the pictorial and modelled records and the effigies of the " years of anguish." The blood of the martyrs is exhibited on the rags and medals, all that remains of the young men who died in preparing the March on Rome. It is, indeed, a diabolically able martyrology ; and its culmination is in the last room of all, the so-called Sacrarium, the votive chapel to the Fascist fallen. It is dark; a militiaman is on guard; a great cross stands in the centre of the semi-circle bearing the design *Per la Patria Immortale.* Behind, across a black horizon, there revolve incessantly the illuminated words : " Present ! Present ! " and " To us ! To us ! " There is a scarcely audible murmur of young voices singing *Giovinezza,* as they follow the banners and flags, the " Desperate," the " Daring," the " Indomitable," the " Audacious," " Italy," " Rome." The souls of the men who contrived the triumph are supposed to live still in the answer of " Present ! " to the roll-call. This is what an ardent Fascist feels, or wishes others to feel :

" The profound silence, as the obscure sky, vast as the dilatations of the soul, retained like the beats of the heart, raises you from the earth and wraps you in the glory of heaven. In the Sacrarium is the mystery of the Revolution. In the Sacrarium is the heart of the Nation. In the Sacrarium is the inextinguishable flame. From the Sacrarium issue the roots which will sink, in infrangible solidity of time and space, the Fascism of Mussolini in the world. From the Sacrarium is diffused the light of the path and the immortality of the Idea to all Italians transformed by the Revolution."[1]

To this exhibition millions have flocked, brought to Rome by reduced fares and by excursions arranged by the various associations of the régime. What a seductive gift to the poor workman or peasant who has, perhaps, never been out of a tiny village or town ! To be given an excursion to Rome, in the company of his boon companions of the *piazza* or the local

[1] Dinale, *La Rivoluzione che vince,* p. 249.

inn, headed by a more or less tuneful band, and proceeded sometimes by home-made banners carrying the name of the home-town, and then to be made a fuss of in Rome, perhaps photographed by the newspapers ! And there, spread in front of him, (and no one can deny it !) are these evidences of the stupidity of the rest of the world, the wickedness and malice of Socialism and Communism, the immaculate patriotic purity, heroism, and self-sacrifice of the Fascist, and the Duce, that good, big, but sometimes angry, father ! Why, you can even see the original document drawn up by D'Annunzio for the Government of Fiume ; letters to and from the Duce ; portions of the bridge over the Arno from which the young manufacturer's son, Berta, was thrown, his fingers cut off bleeding into the river by the wicked " subversives "—yes, *ecco* ! there are the bloodstains ! Who can deny that Fascism is right ? The Revolution ye have always with ye !

If this is the chief example of warming up the funeral baked meats, there are plenty of lesser attempts all over Italy : in the cemeteries, in special votive chapels at the *Case del Fascio*. And from time to time, especially on the anniversary of the death of the heroes, or on the anniversary of the founding of the particular Fascio of that district, or the visit of a personage from Rome, there is a service in which the Youth Organisations, the municipal authorities, the representatives of the Trade Unions, and the rest participate. Flowers are placed on the grave, while a solemn dedication is made by the Catholic Clergy. The Fascists do not forget their dead, because, besides being worthy of remembrance for their own sake, they serve to produce loyalty, they are an educative force over (I use the word *over* advisedly) the young. I must emphasise that these demonstrations take place very, very frequently. As Mussolini has observed, the country must live in a state of excitement.

Yet how short are the memories of man, unless they are revived by the personal daily struggle for *self*-improvement. Already people are calling for a new Exhibition of Fascist achievements, since it is foreseen that with the passage of time the original Exhibition will be but a lifeless Museum, its intensity of passion and blazing drama vanished.

Besides these rather solemn exhibitions, there are the exhibitions and fairs of industry and agriculture, of Fashion, of the East, of Fruit, of Grain and the rest. These have some economic advantage, they bring producers and consumers together, they give those connected with the branch of effort exhibited a joy in their work beyond the earning of a living therefrom. They also afford the Party and the Government a remarkably good opportunity of blowing its own trumpet, as though economic activity could not possibly proceed without its co-operation. They are also occasions for patriotic demonstrations to the Duce, the Secretary of the Party, and the Ministers within whose competence the branch of production falls. The Party or the Government finds motives for some competition, and for the distribution of prizes.[1]

This is not the only way in which Italian citizens are associated with the Fascist Party. The Guard at the Mostra was changed, and groups from every branch of national life—peasants, workmen of such and such a factory, bank-clerks, students, artists, teachers, members of the Party—were each given their turn at exhibiting themselves in uniform in front of the Exhibition. This is not a large price to pay for a citizen's loyalty to a Dictatorship.

I must emphasise and re-emphasise the continuousness of these manifestations and the seriousness and the labour put into their conception and stage management.

Anniversaries. The régime has made a special feature of anniversaries. The Fascist Revolution itself is continuously marked out by the use of Roman numerals counting the Years from October 1922, and occasionally the addition E.F., the *Era Fascista*. On October 28th there is celebrated the Anniversary of the March on Rome. On November 4th the anniversary of the Italian victory on the Piave. On November 11th there is the King's Birthday. At Epiphany, the traditional present-giving season, the Fascist Party gives out toys to poor children, collecting some of these from the wealthier. In school they are

[1] It has been decided to arrange a permanent Exhibition in the new Palazzo Littorio, the Fascist Headquarters, to be built in the Via Impero, near the Colosseum.

taught to give to the poorer. Christmas has also been appropriated by the Fascist Party, " the Christians of the Duce," and again toys and cakes and sweets are sent to the children. On March 23rd, the Foundation of the Fascist Movement is celebrated. On April 21st, there is the Birthday of Rome, established by the Fascists very early in their movement to eliminate the Socialist First-of-May Celebrations. This ranks with October 28th in significance, for if the latter is the date of victory, April 21st is the assurance that the new generations will continue it. On that day the so-called Fascist Levy takes place ; the Young Fascists enter the Party, and the younger children are simultaneously promoted from the lower to the higher ranks. On May 24th, there is the anniversary of Italy's entry into the War, particularly celebrated because it was both a beginning of Fascism, and a revolt of " the People " against the will of Parliament. The occasion is taken to spread the Fascist, and especially the Mussolinian, teaching that Italy's share in the War was of decisive importance, since by her conduct of the War, and especially by the victory on the Piave, she diverted so many of the enemy forces from the western front. It is then easy to show how unjust were the Allies to Italy's proper claims, and therefore how supremely right was the Fascist movement to sweep away the old régime which was prepared to renounce what Italy had so richly merited.

We will describe two of these anniversaries, the March on Rome, October 28th, and the Fascist Levy on April 21st.

A Schoolboy's View of the March on Rome. Let us look at October 28th from the standpoint of the Elementary School Text-Book, Class II, and then see what was actually done by the adults in 1934.

" ' Teacher,' said Bruno to the mistress as she entered the class, ' yesterday daddy bought a new flag, very large, with a lance at the top which looked like gold. To-morrow we are going to put it on the balcony so that everybody in the street will be able to see it ! '

" ' I'm sure you will ! But to-morrow all the balconies and all the windows will have flags. And do you know why ? '

" ' Yes, teacher ! ' cried the children, jumping to their feet.

" ' Good, all of you ! But let only Bruno Sereni speak : What is to-morrow ? '

" ' THE TWENTY-EIGHTH OF OCTOBER.'

" ' And what is the twenty-eighth of October ? '

" ' It is the anniversary of the March on Rome. The Fascists in their Black Shirts enter Rome and put everything in order. Then the Duce arrives and says, " Go away all nasty Italians who do not know how to do things for the good. Now I will see to putting everything right ! Long live Italy ! " '

" ' Good,' said the mistress. ' You say it in your own way, but you explain yourself all the same.'

" ' I know it, too ! ' answered several children.

" ' Certainly ! all of you know already what Fascism is and what Benito Mussolini has done for Italy. On the 28th of October, 1922, there began his great work of renewal, which is still not finished, but which has already changed the face of Italy. This first day we recall with gratitude, and therefore every year we want to solemnise it with great rejoicing. Listen, children : even if you have to make it with paper, to-morrow every window must have its flag.'

" ' Yes, teacher ! Eia ! Eia ! Eia ! Alalà ! ' "

It was the adults, however, who had the most thrilling rites. On the day before the 28th, corresponding to the vigil, Mussolini went to Florence to preside over the interment in Santa Croce of the thirty-seven Florentine Martyrs of the Fascist Revolution. The papers said, " In an atmosphere of high solemnity and passion, Florence expresses to the Duce the loyalty of all Italy." The journalist of the *Corriere* reported the arrival of the Duce.

" In the silence there comes an unexpected quiver. Thousands and thousands of voices would like to shout and acclaim. But the order is that of rapt and thoughtful silence. Here is the Duce. The beat of our hearts cries this out. The united voice is modulated in the surging of the crowd. The arms flash as they are presented in salute. We hold our breaths. One almost senses, in the crowd, the footstep of him who, alone before all, proceeds to the threshold from which he wishes to be the first to salute and reply, ' Present ! ' Hands are raised in long rows. Somebody can no longer retain the shout of love and loyalty, but the voice is at once quiet at a sign. The Leader, dressed in grey-green and the Black Shirt of Commandant of the Militia, passes, answering the salute. In the masculine face of Cæsar a profound thought is modelled. His soul—it can be read in his face and look—is with the Fallen."

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The dead are not dead! And again :

" Fascism since its first battles has shouted ' Present ! ' At the name of every fallen comrade. They are present with the inflaming presence of the exemplary spirit ; present with the exhortation and right of sacrifice ; present, always, in the ranks, from the time when the ranks were thin, and when more than ever stoutness of heart counted, and the Fallen were always a soul alive and tense in the struggle. Present they are still in the ranks, now that the whole people is a legion, present by the sacred communion of blood. They are present among the oldest who sometimes still remember the crash of the mortal blow or the flash of the steel prepared for the ambush. They are present among the young, who shoulder to shoulder feel, marching in their ranks, the exemplary comrades, those who gave their life for the light of their lives ; present, among the boys and girls, at their head, to continue and indicate the ways of duty and fidelity."

Then, it is the law of politics, strike while the iron is hot ! From the Sacrarium of Santa Croce go forth the words of the Duce.

" In difficult times they adopted the robust motto : ' Believe, obey, fight ! ' They believed, they obeyed, they consecrated in battle their supreme devotion to the Cause. Their testimony is sacred, their exhortation solemn and peremptory : woe to those who doubt, woe to the delayers, woe to the pusillanimous, and woe, above all, to the forgetful ! Those who fell for the Revolution preceded us as a glorious advance-guard in the battles of yesterday. They will precede us in the battles of to-morrow, perhaps more severe, but always victorious?

" Black Shirts of all Italy, to whom does this century belong ? "

And all the Black Shirts of all Italy, grown men and women, and little lispers who cannot yet understand a word of what is being said, shout back : " To us ! To us ! To us ! Eia, eia, eia, alalà ! "

On October 28th, 15,000 athletes, led by the Secretary of the Party, file down the Via de l'Impero before Mussolini and all the principalities and powers around him assembled. The bands play ; the crowd shouts and sings ; someone calls out, " Duce, give us a smile ! " and Mussolini turns towards the voice and opens his arms with a wide gesture and a broad smile. All is for the best in the best of all possible worlds ! He specially

applauds the pugilists, showing, says the reporter, " that the sport of pugilism, as he himself has often affirmed, is the most efficacious and the most Fascist of sports." The athletes salute. Then twenty-six Olympic champions hand over rifles, each one bearing the name of a champion who died in the war or the Revolution, to twenty-six Balilla.

The Duce speaks :

" You athletes of all Italy have particular duties. You must be tenacious, chivalrous, daring. Remember that when you fight beyond our frontiers, to your muscles, and above all to your spirits, is confided at that moment the honour and sporting prestige of the Nation (*Applausi vibrantissimi*).[1] You must, therefore, put all your energy, all your will, to attaining the first place in all the tests of the earth, the sea and the sky.

" Black Shirts ! In this atmosphere of such palpitating and ardent enthusiasm of all the Italian people, we are moving towards a new year in the Fascist Revolution, which continues *because it must attain and will attain ever more completely its ends : Social justice for the people, an even greater power for the Nation.*"

There were many other ceremonies to mark the day, and among the most significant for the social policy of the régime was the distribution by Mussolini of rewards of money to the " Faithful of the Soil." Every two years this institution, dedicated to the memory of Mussolini's brother Arnaldo, offers prizes to the contract-workers and *mazzadri*, heads of families who, for more than 100 years, have resided on the same farm, and who with their labour have helped to produce notable agricultural improvements. In 1934, 74 of the Italian Provinces competed, and over 5,000 were, after the most scrupulous investigations, rewarded—several boasted a record of 400 and 500 years, a few nearly 1,000 years !

The Fascist Levy. The Fascist Levy takes place on April 21st. The Balilla (8–14), the Avanguardisti (14–18), the University Fascists and Young Fascists (18–21), are lined up in their formations ; there are present representatives of the Militia, with labarum, standards and fanfares. The Provincial President of

[1] This was about two weeks before the football match between Italy and England at Highbury, November 1934.

the Balilla organisations gives the list of the Avanguardisti who are to pass into the Young Fascist ranks to the Federal Secretary, and the Federal Secretary gives, as the Commandant of the Legion of the Militia, the list of Young Fascisti who will go into the Militia. The Federal Secretary then pronounces the Fascist oath, and asks, " Do you swear it ? " and then the young recruits shout out in unison, " I swear it ! " A membership card of the Young Fascists is then given to an Avanguardista. Then there is the symbolic passage upwards of the other ranks. Simultaneously a Black Shirt gives a Young Fascist a rifle, and a Young Fascist gives an Avanguardista a scarf, with the colours of Rome. Then the youngsters who have carried out this ceremony exchange an embrace ; and in the name of the Duce a cheer is raised. The bands and the trumpets play *Giovinezza*. Mutual congratulations, rousing speeches, pious praise for " the young," marching and counter-marching, and mothers and fathers looking on open-mouthed. Elsewhere there are supplementary celebrations, coloured lights, fireworks, prize distributions, and, to ensure that the country shall know what the régime is giving in return for lost liberties, the Duce gives to a thousand workmen certificates for their old age pensions, and medals for merit in the factory or fields, while industrialists are awarded the title of Cavaliere del Lavoro. The day is also the Holiday of Labour. *In England many more, and more generous, old age pensions are given by a democracy, but simply, without demagoguery, through the Post Office.*

Italy's Principal Industry : Public Spectacles. It is impossible to repeat too often to represent the reality, that such rites and celebrations take place simultaneously and everywhere in Italy. From year to year the central spectacle is cleverly varied. In the Fascist State, where all are in the State and none against it, there is something for everybody at some time, though not all get everything they want all the time, and many get what they do not want for too long a time. Public spectacles have become Italy's staple industry, and it is unfair to their managers and producers that they are not included in the statistics of production. More ingenuity, more thought, more effort, are spent on this industry than on any other. There

is an incessant round of flags, assemblies, parades, marching and counter-marching of the Youth Organisations and Militia, municipal authorities, Trade Unions and other associations, and the ex-Service men, all in uniform and decorations. They all have colours flying ; the bands play, they sing their Party and University songs. There are doings at the Casa del Fascio ; someone speaks ; there are screams of enthusiasm and " high faith," and an " atmosphere of vibrating enthusiasm and gratitude." The leaders sit or stand, very stern, on a platform, and the young men and children march past calling out the Fascist cries, and raising the hand in Roman salute. There may be illuminations in town at night. Fireworks, which were censured as a Socialist extravagance, still give rise to laughing, jeering, jostling and horseplay. There may be a meeting in the local theatre or cinema, when the Honourable X will give an address, either commenting on the Duce's recent speech " of genius," or in memory of some local Fascist martyr, or in praise of one of the famous figures of Italian literature or ancient history. The conclusion, of course, even if it is about Dante, exiled by his opponents (rather a touchy subject in Italy) is necessarily that these men were Fascists before Fascism, or that Fascism continues the glory they originally created and no other conceivable régime could do or had done this. The Duce will show 'em ! In Rome and Milan, of course, the celebration is on a larger and more imposing scale. Certainly, there will be an assembly of all those who have been brought in from the provincial towns by free fares and rations for the day. In Rome they will stand beneath the windows of the Duce's Palazzo Venezia, and lay a wreath in the votive chapel at the Palazzo Littorio, the headquarters of the Party, and another on the tomb of the Unknown Warrior. It may be that, to repeated cries, the Duce will make an appearance at the window ; and it might even be that he would address a few words of " high faith " and " continued aspiration " to the excited crowd. It might even be that the leaders are received upstairs, and that their personal contact with the Duce will make them his slaves, so far as their capacities allow. So far as their capacities allow—for not everyone is sufficiently sensitive or intelligent to make himself the slave of an ideal or a person.

The Curtain Never Falls Once. Now every event of political importance in Fascist Italy happens at least three times: the day before, when it is promised and anticipations are exploited; the day of the actual occurrence, when no one is allowed to remain ignorant that the thing is happening; and the day afterwards, when the newspapers exploit the reports, the editorials and the photographs. These celebrations and anniversaries also enjoy the law of the three-fold impact. The curtain never falls once.

Costume. We have already indicated that it is part of the traditional Fascist spirit to wear the prescribed uniforms on the proper occasion. It is not our intention to give a complete description of the many variations of the Black Shirt of the Revolution. Suffice it to say that to-day, many years after the March on Rome, uniforms, badges, salutes, songs, fanfares, marching order, banners and membership cards, play a greater part than ever. With the passage of the years the whole ritual becomes more complicated and systematised (so does the arrangement of precedence). When on January 15th, 1932, the Secretary of the Party severely punished a Fascist for using the number of his *tessera* as the address of reply to a newspaper advertisement, the comment was:

> "Badge and card are not to be considered in their cold material substance: they are sacred documents for those who have believed in the Fascist idea."

There have been circulars against the wearing of scarfs and other adornments of the Black Shirt. There have been disputes regarding stiff or soft black collars to Black Shirts.

The psychological effects of costume and symbols are important. First the costume and ritual sundered the Fascists from the rest of the nation. It now remains a force of cohesion, distinction and mass-suggestion to get obedience to the leaders. The Black Shirt was invented by the *Arditi*; the Roman salute was introduced by D'Annunzio. The Black Shirt was the first outward sign that a portion of the population had marked itself off from the rest as a Fascist *élite*, and that they were intransigent.

It was a symbol of sedition. The use of costume as a mark of political divergence goes back, of course, centuries: it can be seen in the Guilds of all countries; it can be traced in the branding and special dress of paupers, malefactors and Jews; it can be seen in England, during the early years of the nineteenth century, when Radicals wore white toppers, and to-day in the badge and costume of the Primrose League. In Italy itself, the mediæval factions had their distinctive costume, and more recently the Red Shirts of the Garibaldi made a sensational mark which has never lost its effect. For the peaceful and orderly life of a united nation that wishes the continuance of union, the affectation of a uniform to mark off a particular class, especially a governing class, is highly dangerous. Humane men prefer the other extreme, of minimising differences of pigment and feature in order to preserve the fragile decencies of civilisation. The uniform is the awakener of a conceit in its wearer, to which his mind and character do not entitle him. The shirt makes him different only by a shirt, but its wearing, unfortunately, makes him feel not simply different from, but superior to, his fellow-citizens. The provocation to passionate opposition by his fellow citizens is reinforced by the assumption of intransigent superiority. Commonwealths have always been more securely and happily founded on the removal of outward marks of distinction in their citizens, and the active promotion of a uniformity of appearance and manners. Would-be and successful Dictators naturally wish to divide citizens, to perpetuate, and indeed foment, their hatreds, by providing such marks of distinction as Nature herself, here more merciful than man, has omitted.

The Salute. As for the salute, this also has its sundering effect, as well as its mimetic purpose. What will people think when they look back on the twentieth century, and see all the films of political congresses and processions, with the millions congregated and lifting their hands in the air? Yet whatever the régime may desire, the observer is bound to say that the Italian people, excepting on very rare occasions, do *not* salute in the Roman fashion. They shake hands, or embrace, in the usual way. Following the publication of Mussolini's recommendation of the salute as superior to the handshake because it is

hygienic and saves time, the Secretary of the Party circulated the Party to this effect :

"The ROMAN SALUTE. The Roman salute is now in common usage, because all the Italian people has adopted it.

"Handshaking, especially in official ceremonies, must be absolutely abolished. It is to be abolished also in the introductions which are made on the arrival of a leader, as well as at the end of a speech, including those made in the Chamber of Deputies.

"Apart from every other consideration of a Fascist character, it is unæsthetic, causes a loss of time, and it causes embarrassment owing to the inevitable exclusions which result from it."

The Italian tends, of course, to be effusive in his greetings and congratulations but there is warm-heartedness in the custom ; and it is obvious that the Fascist morale requires a different "style" altogether. It is rarely obeyed, and even when it is obeyed, the handshake happens quite spontaneously, in addition. The injunction has actually had to be posted up in the waiting-rooms at the Party headquarters, lest even the most immediate servants and suppliants of the Party should forget it in the citadel itself. Some Party purists have even tried to raise the matter officially with the Confederation of Hotels, in order that the reception clerk or manager be prohibited from greeting his arriving guests in the time-honoured manner by bowing and rubbing his hands together as though chafing them after a long winter.

The Flags and Banners. The Banner is still the centre of loyalty. The Constitution of the Party says that "the banner is the emblem of the Fascio and the symbol of the Faith." And in official ceremonies a special bearer is nominated, and an escort of honour of five persons chosen from those who participated in the March on Rome. So, too, for the Young Fascists. Most of these banners, or at any rate their prototypes, have been through the street-fighting and have come more or less tattered through ambuscades. They mean very much to their original bearers, and these attempt to pass on the sense of their sanctity, the emotions which first invested them, the sacrifices which were made by the columns at the head of which they were first

carried. Banners have always played an especially conspicuous part in Italian politics : Mussolini's father himself was in an affray over the carrying of a banner of the International about forty years ago. There are also, for the National Party and the Federal Groups, standards called the *Labarum*, the originals of which were the standards of the Christians taken over by Constantine—they are surmounted by an Imperial Eagle, and form an especially solemn symbol. The people move after it, as the Israelites after the Ark.

So the individual molecules are made to cohere in little groups around these magnets, and it is the property of the magnetic forces partially to blind the members. The Fascist régime reaps the benefit. Finally, the National Flag has been remarkably glorified, in part as a reaction against the Opposition parties, especially the Socialists and the Communists, who had immortal longings for the Red Flag and not infrequently flew it from the public buildings which they occupied before Fascism. Mussolini advanced the theme of the Flag early in the evolution of his movement :

" The national Flag is not a rag, even if it has by chance been dragged in the mud of the bourgeoisie or its political representatives ; it is the symbol of sacrifice of thousands upon thousands of men. For it, from 1821 to 1918, infinite ranks of men have suffered privations, prison and the gallows. Around it, when the call to arms rang out, there was poured out, in the course of these four years of war, the flower of the blood of our sons, of our brothers and yours " (March 20th, 1919, to factory workers of Dalmine).

And Michele Bianchi expressed (perhaps unconscious of its full significance) the true psychology of Flag-loyalty when he said :

" Without the Dead, without the Flag, without the man who is to be obeyed, without symbols and conventions, without a special æsthetic, without a special *rhetoric*, it is not possible to make a Revolution. For the Revolution involves first and foremost the most ingenuous instincts of man, his childish qualities, that is to say, whatever in him is the purest and the most savage."

Few men can appreciate, or continuously keep in their foreconsciousness, ideals and abstract ideas without insistent external

reminder, whether the purpose be revolution or stability. They can be assisted by means which in any case gratify their simple love of colour. A sufficient and ingenious display of the symbol produces an accumulation of prestige for it, and the spiritual ends it symbolises. The psychology of conditioned reflexes was well-known long before psychological laboratories were established. Hence the cult of the Flag and the banners. Hence the solemn unfurling of the Flag in the elementary schools every morning.

Songs and Shouts. Finally, the Fascists have made a special use of the ancient device of community singing, the instinct of men to lift their voices in unison. There is hardly any other form of artistic exercise which so rouses fellow-feeling and depresses the instinct to grumble and criticise. The Italians are especially fond of singing. Here was the perfect instrument of subdual to the wishes of the Duce and his friends. Certain songs are official[1]: *Giovinezza; The Hymn of the University Fascists; and the Hymn of the Young Fascists.* With the knowledge that the Fascist system is a Dictatorship founded on a violent insurrection, and maintained in very large part by the threat of force, let us hear what these songs, all in march time, actually say, though the singer does not stop to think about this.

Giovinezza appeared in a new version in 1932. I compare the earlier and the later versions.

First Version.	*Present Version.*
Hail, O people of Heroes, Hail, O immortal Fatherland, Thy children are reborn With faith in the ideal.	Same.
The valour of thy warriors, The virtue of thy pathfinders, The vision of Alighieri Shines now in every heart.	Same.

[1] There is a collection called *Inni e Canzoni della Patria Fascista*, published by the Party for the Foreign Fasci.

First Version.

CHORUS:

Youth! Youth!
Springtime of loveliness
In Fascism is the salvation,
Of our liberty!

(According to Fascist statistics 3,000 people lost their lives in fighting for Fascism, while singing *this* version.)

Present Version.

Within the Italian boundary,
Italians have been refashioned,
Refashioned by Mussolini,
For the War of to-morrow,
For the joy of labour,
For the peace and the laurel,
For the shaming of all those
Who their country deny.

The poets and the craftsmen,
The gentry and the peasants,
With the pride of Italians,
Swear loyalty to Mussolini.
There is no poor district
Which does not send its tale,
Which does not unfurl its banners
Of Fascism the redeemer.

CHORUS:

Youth! Youth!
Springtime of loveliness,
In the bitterness of life,
Your song rings out, and away!

Hymn of the Young Fascists.

The Fire of Vesta which rises outside the Temple,
With Wings and Flame Youth doth pass,
Ardent torches on the altars and tombs,
We are the hopes of the time to be.

Duce, Duce! he who knows not how to die,
He who will never deny his oath,
Unsheath the sword! When thou wishest it,
Standards in the breeze, we shall be with Thee!
Weapons and flags of the ancient heroes,
For Italy, O Duce! we'll make flash in the sun!

Life goes and takes us with it, it promises the future
A virile youth with Roman will, will fight,
It will come, the day will come,
When the Great Mother of Heroes will call,
For the Duce, O Fatherland, for the King !
To us ! we will give Glory and Empire beyond the sea !

Balilla !

The stone whistles, the name rings out,
Of the boy of Portoria,
And the intrepid Balilla
Becomes gigantic in our story . . .
It was of bronze that mortar
Which in the mud foundered,
But the boy was all of steel
And his Mother he set free !

CHORUS :
Proud of eye, and lithe our step,
Clear the cry of valour :
To our foes, in front, a stone,
To our friends, our hearts !

Up Wolfcubs, and Eaglets,
Like the Sardinian drummer boys,
Like the Sicilian *picciotti*,
Bronzed Garibaldian heroes !
The soul vibrates in the breast,
Athirst for virtue.
Quiver, Italy, the Valiant,
And in the quivering there art Thou !

We are clouds of seeds,
We are flames of courage,
For us the streams sing,
For us May shines and sings :
But if one day the battle
Sets Alps and seas aflame,
We shall be the bullets,
Of Holy Liberty !

' The Constitution of the Young Fascists says, " Young Fascists must know and must be able to sing the hymns and the songs of the Revolution."

Youth

Now the constitution of the Party, prescribes only the structure. It almost entirely omits the dynamic and spiritual vitals, excepting for the clauses which require obedience to the Duce and the Duce's *Political and Social Doctrines*. It accordingly omits two things of tremendous importance which made the *coup d'état* successful, and which are of cardinal significance in sustaining the peculiar morale of Fascism, and of keeping the régime alive and fresh. The one is the insistence on the value of Youth, the other is the Rotation of Office. The formal documents which substantiate these principles are the " dispositions," the " circulars " and " order sheets " issued by the Party headquarters. For all that the formal constitution of the Party is concerned, the Fascist régime might just as well depend upon the reverse : the predominance of the Old, and Permanence of Office. The spirit of the régime, the conventions of the constitution demand their opposites, and the examination of these principles and the derivative practices is of very great interest.

Mussolini, appealing from the old men of the old régime, had necessarily to appeal to the young men who would help him to make the new. Not that he immediately confounded youth and age with years. He distinguished between the old who remain young in spirit, and the young who are mentally and spiritually old before their time. Naturally all who agreed with him were young, and all who disagreed with him were senile. He appealed to the generation who were in the trenches, and, of them, to the younger rather than the older. Little by little, followed by the *very* young men, whose song *Giovinezza* was symbolic of their conceit of themselves and the rest of Italy, the Cult of Youth became a characteristic, and even the outstanding feature, of the Fascist movement. It is now, of course, used to keep the young men loyal to the Party, and to win the rising generation for the future. It is true that the founder of the movement, only thirty-nine years of age when he arrived in Rome, is already fifty-one, and bald and grey ; and it is also true that many of the Fascist leaders wore grey beards in the early days, and are now either dead or doddering. Still the cry of " Youth ! Youth ! " arises wherever youth is met together to be harangued by the leaders.

They are all drunk with youth. All promises are made to youth, all praises are sung to youth, all the future is entrusted to youth, it would seem sincerely and with confidence.

Youth, indeed, has been let into office at a very early age, in the Party and in Parliament. Youth is also permeating the Trade Union organisations and the Universities, and the other charitable and cultural institutions of the régime. What are we to think of this phenomenon ?

A Good Investment. The cult of youth has so far been a splendid investment for the leaders of the Party. The youths wielded the weapons of the Revolution (bombs, daggers, cudgels and castor oil), and made the fearful din and shouted the threats which caused the walls of Jericho to fall flat. A young man with a cudgel was for these purposes worth ten philosophers ; for the philosophers did not believe that wounding and murder could do Italy any ultimate good. As for the young, they asked no questions of their leaders. The enthusiastic readiness of young men exhorted to do valiant deeds is well-recognised in a speech of Mussolini's, to the Young Fascists in Congress in Rome (October 3rd, 1931) :

" Young Fascists !

" There are two words that echo in the heart and fill with pride the generations which arise in the new Italy willed by the Black Shirts.

" Young, and therefore ardent, impetuous, foreign to scruples of prudence and calculating prudence ; young and therefore free in mind ; not already tormented by the necessities of life and, above all, anxious about the future in whose bosom lies the event which makes history.

" Fascists, and therefore warriors in a great army, bearers and transmitters of a consecrated faith which finds in the young, the guarantee of its development and its permanence ! Fascists, and therefore organised, disciplined, different from the others who do not fight ; prompt to assume responsibilities, ready to obey, and conscious of an exact duty to be fulfilled ! "

In plain language, the youngsters were splendidly adapted to the support of a Dictatorship. Free as yet from the need of making a future for themselves, ardent and impetuous so that reason played a lesser part than the generous instinct to help

those who appealed to them for help, they were perfect subjects on which to impress the lesson of obedience. They were to be ready to fight and do their duty, that is their duty officially blinkered, for the duty was to be a *precise* one, defined by the leaders. They were not encouraged to become citizens with independent minds, to train themselves for responsibility, and to discover freely the duties they thought it right to perform. Yes ! youth has all the qualities of energy, generosity, enthusiasm, readiness to follow decided leadership, plasticity, which tend to action; and none of the qualities of knowledge, balance, reflection, self-criticism, experience of the margin between the ideal and real, promise and performance, which would cause it to ask inconvenient questions of its leaders.

At the present stage of Italian development the young are wanted for their obedience. But there are already signs that some are anxious for the contributions they may make to the future. There are those who, like Gentile, Camillo Pelizzi, Bottai, Arnaldo Mussolini (who died in 1931) want these young men for the fresh air they will bring into the Party, as Pelizzi says " to cause the mummified nullities to crumble into dust, and to give evidence to the live values," (*Critica Fascista,* September 1929).

The leaders seem to have become suddenly frightened round about 1929. The challenge of the Vatican from the day in February, when the Concordats and Treaty were defined, may have had much to do with this. It claimed the total control of youth for itself. The régime having arrived at power and stability, the problem of its perpetuation flared up, and the leaders realised that they could not, and ought not to, expect that the Fascism of the next generation would be the same as that of this. The instrument of auto-criticism, and of perpetuation with progress, must be the Party itself. There is, indeed, a noteworthy oscillation between the views expressed by Mussolini in the extract given above, and the views that there must be continuous freshness, creativeness, and novelty, so that the Party and the régime shall not doze off into a state of dogmatic insensibility. In 1930, the subject formed the contents of an order of the day issued by the Secretary of the Party, Starace, who has been particularly interested in the establishment and the development of the Youth organisations (January 20th) :

" The régime is and intends to remain a régime of the young, even from the point of view of actual age, wherever it is possible. To give an example : other things being equal, when we have to choose between thirty years of age and forty years of age, we prefer the thirties. The squads were composed of young men, sometimes of adolescents, who knew how to fight, and died intrepidly under the sign of the Littorio.

" The régime intends to prepare spiritually all the youth of Italy, from whom by successive selections, there must issue the ranks of the governing classes of Italy of to-morrow, and for the purpose it has created by the side of the civil Militia of the Party, the organisations of the Balilla, the Avanguardisti, the University groups. The totalitarian principle of the education of youth—systematically demanded by Fascism—responds to this supreme necessity of the Fascists Revolution which intends to last, that is to say, exist continuously in the future.

" By the side of this preparation of a general order, the young people, and even younger people than they, that is to say those who could not participate in the War or the Revolution, must be resolutely introduced by their beginner stage in the ranks of political, administrative, Trade Union, journalistic, co-operative, academic, military, sporting, and *dopolavoro*, life, without jealous stupidities and timorous preconceptions. On the severe rest of life itself the least able will succumb, the better will always progress into positions of higher command and responsibility.

" The young—more than anybody else—must know how to obey to acquire the right, or rather, the duty of commanding ; more than the rest they must know how to dare ; more than others they must despise an ideal of life, whether individual or collective, of indifference, or what is worse, of comfort.

" These conditions posed, the young of to-day and to-morrow will be the continuers in spirit and form of the Revolution of October 1922, a Revolution still in its ascending movement, because many of its aims are yet to be attained."

Results. What end has all this served ? It has certainly brought into the Party and the State and the dependent organisations many young men ; but, of course, it could not exclude all those, who, not being sufficiently anti-Fascist to merit immediate dismissal, would make room for all the aspirants. The doctrine and the practice satisfied some, and some only, of the first great wave of young men who had emerged from the Revolution. They had jobs and honours. But what of the effect upon them as

continuers of the Revolution, and upon the new ranks arising from the schools and the Universities? No one can look below the rhetorical surface of Fascist life and the Press and official speeches without being aware of considerable disquiet. The advance ranks of young men, having attained their jobs, are not anxious to leave them, and they produce every conceivable argument for being left alone, and some of the arguments are sound. There must, for example, be some stability in the State and the Party. Organisation requires time and knowledge. The old guard are entitled to a reward. The young men may have learnt their Fascism from books and at school, but the office holders, though not very old, are veterans of the War or the Revolution, and they contain the passion of the Fascist movement.

If these arguments were conclusive, it would indeed be a poor look-out for the new generation, and even for the State. The sudden sweeping away of the men of forty-five and upwards in the War, and through Fascist administrative "purges" and "liquidations," opened the way to positions of major responsibility and reward for those between twenty-five and forty-five. The natural retirements and deaths which come gradually, and are filled by the natural and gradual substitutions, were replaced by a wholesale clearance and gift of offices, a remarkable swoop of promotions. Quite as great, therefore, must be the exclusions of the new generation from the entrances into the ranks, and thence into the ranks above.

This enforced waiting produces in the younger generation a certain cynicism about, and an unfortunate obsequiousness to, their elders, from whom all blessings flow, and a bitter and selfish hunt for the few jobs that become available. The claims made by and on behalf of youth, following all the flattery which has been poured upon them, are pitched tremendously high, and the obstacles stimulate to a more and more extravagant style. The disappointments are proportionately painful. Already, the older generation are objecting that the young have as yet created nothing to show as a warrant for their claims; that even their enthusiasm is the enthusiasm of those fed on literature; that they have much to learn before they can be entrusted with political and administrative responsibilities. (Even the two-edged

argument, that Fascists are made, not born, has been advanced.) The first rows of office holders were particularly fortunate in not having to pass through the usual process of political apprenticeship and selective competition, which is the normal result of a healthily functioning democratic government; and, individually, they are not as capable servants of Party and State as those who issue from such competition tend to be.

Since 1922, youth has had a very easy, not a hard, time in Italy, which is supposed to have introduced a *severe* régime. At first it was necessary to fight. Later, it was only necessary to repeat the catchwords of the régime, to comment slavishly upon the speeches and the acts of the leaders, and generally to behave as the sedulous apprentice and pander. A generation of *arrivistes* was the natural result, and, like such people everywhere so in Italy, they are noisy, swift, lacking preparation, and sour. They always have a hope, if not an ace, up their sleeves. Indeed, the Party is forced to increase its activities to give the candidates something to do. One of the motives for the establishment of the political schools for the would-be governing class, is to plant a hope and an activity which will hold off, if not dispel, disappointment.

Rotation of Office. Partly as an outlet for clamant youth, partly as a deliberate policy of administrative efficiency (to avoid bureaucratic ossification and circumlocution), the Party loudly proclaims the principle of Rotation in Office. Of the preoccupation of the Party with the problem of multiple jobs we have already spoken. But beyond the determination that no person in the Party shall have more than one job, in order to reduce the power of individuals to the minimum (which is a fundamental corollary of the dictatorial principle to divide and rule), and to make enough jobs to go round, there was the problem of forcing the men who had the jobs to pass from one to the other, and sometimes entirely out of a job for a space of time while one of the outsiders was treated to a term of power.

In a Dictatorship which aspires to be continuing and progressive, the Rotation of Offices is as essential as it was deemed to be in the ultra-democratic system of the United States of America when the Spoils System was first introduced on a large scale.

There is this in common between democracies and Dictatorships, that their servants, to be fresh-minded, enthusiastic, and creative, need to be in fear of losing their jobs, while those outside must be nourished with the hope of some day getting them. The Fascists have been at considerable pains to argue that a system of hierarchy does not imply an arrangement of *jobs*, but an arrangement of *functions*, and that the job-holders are subservient to those functions. The figure of the circulation of the blood is often invoked to explain that the body politic can only be kept healthy and alive if the jobs circulate through the medium of fresh, living, elements, along the vascular system of the constitution.

Changing the Guard. What would you ? This figure of speech is vastly more pleasing to those who invented it than to those who are expected to be pleased to surrender their jobs through its logical force. The rotation of office has received the euphemistic designation of the " Changing of the Guard." The psychological trick is interesting. The Revolution is still being *fought*, it is claimed ; and therefore it is natural that the ranks under arms shall have the honour and responsibilities of keeping guard, each in their turn.

Hence, there are periodical movements of officers of the Party and Parliament ; they are promoted, or demoted, or sent to other districts, or dropped altogether for a time. There is considerable advantage to the Party and the State in this rotation. Those who expect to be called into office have something to hope for and a reason for remaining loyal. They are keyed up, in general and in particular, to impress the powers who will nominate them. Now this does not imply that they will seek to increase their efficiency in preparation for their job, but it certainly means that it will make them ready to undertake some activity, journalism, or teaching, or addressing meetings, sufficiently conspicuous to attract the attention of those with the appointing power. Naturally, of course, in a system where publicity is the last thing desired, and where there are no regular paths of promotion, but where personal choice is paramount, and even personal command (without any previous consultation) to a post, whether the individual

wants it or not, there is a great deal of backstairs intrigue. Good intriguers, other things being equal, and very often other things not being equal, have the advantage in a dictatorial system. The men are asked by the leaders to *depersonalise* themselves for the sake of the Party, in imitation of Mussolini, in November 1921, when the Party was established ; but, indeed, they are not especially successful in achieving such self-mastery. If, then, some scores are made happy and hard working by the rotation of office, if they work feverishly with new ideas, even if they are only small variations on the earlier ones during the first few months, just as many are discouraged and disgruntled by the ejectory operation. Sometimes, of course, the rotation becomes ridiculous, as when the new office holder appears to think that he could not possibly make his full contribution to the Fascist State without making a clean sweep of all the minor offices, down to the shorthand typists and the messengers. It is comprehensible in a régime where publicity is excluded, and where intrigue necessarily plays a large part, that a new man wants no truck with the old body of workers. For all are Fascists, but some Fascists play for their own hands—how sick of this is Mussolini's heart !—and perhaps the most sensitive and conscientious may be overreached by the most brutal and selfish. Nor is the changing of the guard always undertaken by the local secretary of this, that or the other, with the efficiency of the Party as the chief object. He himself has favourites to place, and those he dislikes to throw out, on personal grounds. There are little cliques who play together to outwit other little *combinazioni*. In the Order Sheet of February, 1934, the Secretary of the Party answered a correspondent (probably fictitious) who had asked whether he would not have preferred a person for a certain office *in whom he had confidence*, that, " The Secretary of the Party has no men of his own, he has around him neither circles, nor friends, nor bodyguard. For the Secretary of the Party those who serve the Revolution and the Duce faithfully are all men of confidence." This answer was a public rebuke to those who had acted in a different spirit.

Yet however genuine and honest the " changing of the guard," such is the mind of the people, that it always suspects that the outgoing official is being punished for incompetence,

misdemeanour or crime. It is the nature of the system that the public can either not be sufficiently informed, or that it suspects, with its sardonic suspicious sneer, trickery somewhere. Why should a *good* man be made to go ? It is not natural.

Institutes of Fascist Culture. After the advent of the Fascists, the country was for some time broken broadly into two great intellectual schools. The leader of the intellectual attachment to the régime was Gentile ; its foremost antagonist, Benedetto Croce. It became increasingly evident that the vigour and continuity of Fascism urgently required the creation of a doctrine, and its sedulous propagation. Hence, at a Congress held at Bologna in March 1925, there were established the Fascist Institutes of Culture. At this assembly Professor Sergio Panunzio asked that a doctrine be formulated by the Party. Gentile was opposed to this. He confessed a horror of " intellectualism." He was satisfied with the " mystic sentiment " from which Fascism drew its inspiration. Culture, intelligence, yes ! but intellectualism, no ! He wanted the Fascistisation of Culture. " Ours is different from any other culture." This different, special, peculiar culture, should be taught by Fascists. The intention was to prove to Italy, and the world, that the Fascist movement was not synonymous with reaction, nor simply a defence against Bolshevism. It had to show that it had a positive, universal, outlook, to teach which was actually Progress in its own meaning of that term. The National Institute was inaugurated in Rome in December of 1925, and branches were gradually established in all the principal cities. Let us hear what Gentile thought their character to be !

" Like all the traditional academies it will bring together and co-ordinate, from the Fascist point of view, all the most eminent men, in the various disciplines of which the organism of scientific thought is composed ; but differently from the old academies, these intellectual energies will stimulate and not enclose themselves in abstract speculations remote from any action on the life of the nation, economic, moral and political, but rather will concern themselves with illuminating and forming the conscience of the new Italy that the Fascists look for, proud of its glorious past, and at the same time potent with the renewed fervour of labour and thought in the discipline of the

State, conscious of the high national destinies. This institute which we have to-day the honour of inaugurating in the presence of the Chief of the Government, in the Campidoglio, is designed to be not only a new form of the multiplex, innovating and creative activity of Fascism, but, above all, a profession of faith, worthy of the profound spiritual motives of the Fascist movement, worthy of Italy which Fascism has the ambition to father in itself and to make effective the splendid traditions and immortal forces."[1]

Accordingly, the Central Institute keeps watch over the general programme of the local bodies, and is the centre of information, advice, bibliographical assistance. It has a remarkably good library of Fascist and anti-Fascist literature, Italian and foreign periodicals. It, like the local institutes but more capably, provides courses of lectures by distinguished lecturers, and promotes discussions on topics relating to the domestic and international situation of Fascism. Its topics of discussion are not chosen in a narrow spirit; and, indeed, although it is definitely a propagandist body in support of the régime, its working definition of "culture" is surprisingly wide. I have heard lectures on economic and political topics discussed with a detachment from the immediate obsession of Fascism, and with as analytical a spirit as any I have heard in the most scientific institutions of England, so much so that the audience was at a loss to grasp what was happening to their minds, until at last the lecturer made the regular obeisance to the gods of the State, and Fascism was somehow dragged in at the tail end.

Yet, it would be wrong to believe that Culture was more important than Fascism. Fascism is first. The meetings represent one more stage in the inculcation of a uniform set of values in citizens throughout the kingdom. In some of the meetings there is simply a regurgitation of the Duce's latest speech, together with a tame commentary by a tamed lecturer, probably from the local university or advanced secondary school.

My friend who accompanied me, because I had once more been gulled into believing that something would really be *said*, and because my gulled enthusiasm communicated itself to him, groaned again and again: "Oh, oh! We've heard it a hundred

[1] Cf. Gentile, *Fascismo e Cultura*, 1928, p. 46.

times before ! The same lecture. Word for word. Oh, my God ! A hundred times already." But the lecturer sucked his teeth, and, very well satisfied with himself, went right on. My friend, at least, was not gulled for the 101st time ! The discussion is skilfully discreet, even stealthy. The chairman is not usually anxious to throw the meeting completely open to free debate ; diverse opinions and the exchange of experience get no room. And it would be dangerous to scratch the polished mirror of uniformity which shines so luminously in the speech of the Duce, as so faithfully re-delivered by the lecturer. When really important issues have been raised by a daring and honest lecturer, discussion has not seldom become too passionate for continuance or repetition.

There is another type of lecture where an important personage comes down, let us say a member of the Academy of Italy, established by the Fascist régime in 1927. The occasion is made a great event in the lives of good Fascists. The evening is solemn, and is conducted in the spirit of a very fervent, very pious, Church assembly. People dress as for Church. There is much quiet and respectable greeting of workers from other towns and other vocations. The march of events and the personal gossip of the movement (very interesting !) are discussed in whispers. The lecturer is greeted with almost sobbing reverence. All the university students have been mobilised to hear with bated breath the wisdom of the régime through the mouth of one of its wisest. Whether the lecture has anything to do with Fascism or not, whether its argument tells in favour of the régime or not (conclusions which I seem to think quite naturally condemn the régime, my Fascist friends seem to swallow as though hypnotised) the whole affair is a demonstration in support of the Duce.

Any Culture is Dangerous in a Dictatorship. Whether, in the long run, the seeds of contradiction which are inherent in every affirmation, and still more in every detached analysis, will bring forth doubt, their typical fruit, we have yet to see. There is the dilemma of a Dictatorship; it cannot remain silent, for fear of disobedience, yet its compulsion to advertise in order to perpetuate itself arouses thoughts that may kill it. However,

our immediate observation is that the Institutes are the transmitters of Fascist morale, that is obedience to and faith in the Duce. They tend to produce a uniform effect on all the authorities in the régime, on the young, and even on the elementary and secondary schools, since many of the teachers are members, and get their political and economic education through them.

In his inaugural speech at the Second Congress of the Institutes of Culture in November 1931, Gentile traced the cultural history of the past seven years, and suggested the road for future development. He observed that in the past it had been necessary to defend the Fascist régime by opposing to the total denials of its opponents as total an assertion. And then he said, (*Tipografia del Senato*, Roma, 1932, p. 9) :

" To-day, our polemics against our adversaries have lost interest, because there are no longer any adversaries. Fascism has won ; and the dead can be left to bury their dead. To insist on the necessity of the new culture, which must be that of the Fascist, to continue to comment on and to illustrate the principles of Fascist civilisation and the standards and conceptions and institutions where the régime has come, realising the spirit of the new Italy, might appear a superfluous work, neither useful nor very intelligent. The foundations are already laid ; it is time to construct. The Italian people is Fascist in its entirety ; and the retarders have been swept off the road, on which the people may freely march. This people may march, but it will only march if it is disciplined. And discipline cannot be exterior if it is not also an interior discipline : a discipline of the spirit, because in the first place a discipline of the thoughts.

" Even as baptism does not suffice to make a Christian of a Christian, the membership card does not make a Fascist be a Fascist. He also needs *grace* which will help him to-day, and to-morrow, and will never abandon him. He has need of education and auto-education, of a continuous effort of perfectioning, by means of practice and by means of reflection. Because one disagrees with one's adversaries, and because one argues with them, and one tries to be in the right. But it may be, and, among living men, there is, and I should like to say that it is good that there shall be, disagreement also with one's friends. Even among the most faithful members of the same Party there are divergencies of opinion ; and it is understandable that not all of them can be right. It is necessary to discuss, to criticise, that which at the first glance appears to be right : to hear the reasons of those who doubt us, and think differently. Through this discussion,

this criticism, this exchange of correction, every one of us may succeed in effectively conquering himself and of being, in fact, Fascist. Even here to presume to be what one pretends to be is to preclude the possibility of becoming it. It is necessary instead always to doubt oneself, and always to feel inferior to the ideal which floats before us, and the title to which one wishes to deserve."

Thus the task, which would seem to us impossible, of the full making of Fascists, is yet before the régime. John Stuart Mill himself would not have been dissatisfied with the full implications of Gentile's arguments in favour of doubt and criticism. They do honour to Gentile ; if they were in being they would scarcely give continued life to Fascism.

Chapter XV

THE FASCIST PARTY: YOUTH ORGANISATIONS

The Fascist says, "Let us secure the young before they have time to think; before other ideas are put into their heads by teaching or experience. Let us teach them the truth before they have learnt error. Let us take them when they are impressionable, and if they should never become entirely ours, at least they will never be anyone else's." The theory is to strengthen some of the dispositions in the young, and to atrophy others; to make some reactions prompt, automatic, and pleasurable, and others painful. Reason will thus be excluded or attenuated, and an automatically uttered phrase will be the screen between reality and mind.

Like other parties in a free State, the Fascist movement in its early days sought out the young, though not as the logical implication of any philosophy of the State, but as fighters, as by-products of its squads of action, and as a manifestation of strength. After the Party arrived in Rome, it proceeded with the more deliberate creation of groups of Avanguardisti and an even younger group, the so-called Balilla organisation, something like the Boy Scouts of England, but, unlike these, definitely a part of the Party organisation. In March 1924, the Grand Council discussed the matter at length, when the General Political Inspector, Luigi Freddi, reported on the matter and observed that the Avanguardia was "the faithful and purest reserve of Fascism, and ought to continue still by the side of the Party to give all the contribution of its faith and its sacrifice, because it would represent the purest and most devoted youth of the reborn fatherland." The Duce, who saw the basic importance of such a control of youth, both as an instrument of domination and as a contribution to the making of the Italian character no less than as a recreation for the young people themselves, promised the best possible support of the Party for

the young, " who had written pages in blood in the History of Fascism and who represented a great reserve of fresh energies for the future."

Until 1927, these organisations were still Party organisations, in the strictest sense of the word. Then, as the result of a Law of April 3rd, 1926, the " Institute for the National Balilla, for the Assistance and Physical and Moral Education of Youth," came into existence. This work became one of the legal institutions of the régime, and with a range and ramifications which bring practically every child in Italy under Fascist control. It soon excluded any other organisation in the country from effective influence over the children. The Introduction to the Law[1] said :

" Fascism considers the problem of the education of the young as one of the fundamental tasks of the Revolution beyond argument for the guarantee of the continuity of his historic foundation : the régime while occupying itself through various institutions, with infusing into the young that fund of knowledge which will serve to introduce them to the exercise of a profession in the life of the nation, has the duty of providing, with the proper methods, for the preserving uncorrupt of youth[2] and to prepare it, in an atmosphere of discipline, for the duties incumbent on each citizen in an organised state, to assure the greatness of the nation."

Until 1929, the Institute was a semi-autonomous body, forming a semi-detached part of the Ministry of the Interior ; in 1929, it was made a branch of the Ministry of Education, though with a President of its own, who is an Under-Secretary of the Ministry. School gymnastics which, since 1923, had been under the control of a special organisation outside the Ministry of Education, now reverted to the Ministry within the Balilla organisation. So that the whole of the after-school education of Youth, in its physical as well as its other aspects, is under the survey of the Ministry of Education. The Balilla organisation has become part and parcel of the regular educational system of the country, though its objects are, in the political sphere, to breed Fascists.

The work of the Institute includes all Italian youth up to the

[1] April 3rd, 1926.
[2] Preserving youth uncorrupt !

age of eighteen. After that all between the age of eighteen and twenty-one are taken care of (since 1930) by the Young Fascist Organisation. All over twenty-one, coming from the Youth organisations, are taken care of by the Party. From the age of eight to fourteen the children are organised in the Balilla ranks, and from fourteen to eighteen in the Avanguardisti.

The more general objects of the Institute are: "To prepare the young physically and morally in such wise as to render them worthy of the new manner of Italian life." In particular the Institute pursues this end through:

"Infusing into the young the sentiment of discipline and of military education; pre-military instruction, gymnastic-sporting instruction, spiritual and cultural education, professional and technical education, religious education and assistance."

Exclusive Control of Youth. Now in order to secure the entire control of the young in these respects, the State has made the exclusion of any other organisation for the teaching of youth plain beyond a doubt. The Decree Law of April 1928 said: "To assure the attainment of the ends envisaged by the law instituting the Opera Nazionale Balilla, from the entry into force of the present decree, there is prohibited every kind of formation or organisation, even of a provisional nature, which purposes to promote the education, preparation for a profession, art, or craft, or in any other way, the physical moral or spiritual education of the young excepting the formations or organisations making party of the Opera Nazionale Balilla." All other organisations were dissolved. In his Report to the Chamber of Deputies on the Agreement with the Lateran, Mussolini roughly brushed away any idea that an alternative or supplement to the Fascist appropriation of the children was conceivable:

"Some other system of government, a system not ours, the demo-liberal system, the system of those whom we despise, may think it proper to renounce the education of the younger generations. We, not! In this respect we are intractable. Ours must be the teaching! These children must be educated in our religious faith; but we have the duty of integrating this education, we need to give these youngsters the sense of virility, of power, of conquest; and above all we need to inspire them with our faith, and to inflame them with our hopes."

The solemn and troubled protest of the Pope[1] won nothing from the Fascist leaders in this matter of the monopoly of the education of the young, excepting admission of religious instruction on the terms it suited the State to concede. For how does the Balilla organisation conceive the task that lies before it? Certainly in a religious spirit, but not in a Catholic Christian spirit. Certainly as one of a grade of hierarchies leading up to an infallible authority, but not to the Pope. Certainly as a progress in fidelity and sacrifice, but neither to Christ nor to Peace.

Discipline. We begin with discipline and military education, which naturally applies more fully to the Avanguardisti than to the Balilla, but yet to these also in so far as it is possible.[2] "Discipline consists in the respect and obedience which the Avanguardista owes to his own commanders and to the persons who are in any way set above him in his civil and military education." The very first stage in the hierarchy of authorities is the head of a squad chosen from the youngsters themselves. He has to be regarded as a good comrade, whose advice is to be listened to, and whose example is to be followed. There are the rules regarding salutes and uniforms. There is the obligation to participate in all the ceremonies and celebrations commanded by the authorities of the Fascist Party, as well as in patriotic ceremonies prompted by other organisations. And they may participate in reviews and parades of the Army.

Militaristic. The pre-military education is conducted by officers of the Militia, the spirit and the nature of which, and its connection with the regular armed forces, we have discussed already. This education takes place through lectures, exercises, excursions, marches, first-aid tuition and practice, hygiene, and demonstrations of the various kinds of weapons, the rifle being familiar to all and machine guns confined to specially selected members. There is no doubt about the sweeping away of ideas of universal and perpetual peace from the minds of these children.

[1] Discussed in Chapter XVI. below.

[2] Quotations are taken from the laws and rules collected in the official document called *Opera Nazionale "Balilla" per l'assistenza e l'educazione fisica e morale della gioventù* (1932).

None of the cobwebs of pacifism are stupidly left there to impede them from entering any war declared just by their leaders. It would be difficult to prove to them, after their training, that Italy can ever be in the wrong.

There is a military sternness about this training, even a brutality—I have seen them gasping and stumbling in a fairly ordinary march—and the Duce personally gave orders after the terrible weather of April 21st, 1933, that, once the troops had set out from their houses, they were not on any account whatever to return until the ceremony they were going to was concluded—a salutary but harsh lesson. Yet there is also a touch of good comradeship, and a care for the young people for their own sakes. There is the big brother idea, to offer what the family or the ordinary day-schools cannot offer. This comradeship also enables the leaders to get to know the young people rather well, and this knowledge is a great asset to the régime, for if the leaders are loyal to the Duce they can bring to him and his service all these young people. Weakness, mental reserve, or potential moral dissent are difficult to hide from the leaders. The gymnastic-sporting part of the Balilla work follows the usual methods of drill and sport. In the case of the very young, there is naturally little more than semi-organised simple games, or play in its easiest and freest form. For the older boys, there are much more ambitious exhibitions, exercises, evolutions, and athletics. The intention is only remotely military. It is said to be " to educate the young to the sense of strength and of beauty conforming to the principle that a healthy intellectual life cannot develop excepting in a healthy and robust body." This opinion is no doubt true. But the healthiest mind is not necessarily the product of a system, even if gymnastic in form, which obstructs the entry of all alternative points of view into the mind which is sustained by the healthy body. What the practice of gymnastics does, in addition to strengthening and beautifying the body, is similar to that achieved by community singing; it generates a sense of the need for common action, and obedience to a rule which commingles all in ambition for the success of a common enterprise. In Italy, besides producing an unwonted *esprit de corps*, and slightly, but not appreciably, decreasing the unholy triumphant yelling over the beaten adversary, it takes the young

men away from the political conventicles of the past, away from the cafés where they might learn card-playing and an over-fondness for wine.

Character before Brain. From the standpoint of the virtues which athletic exercise and competition are capable of inculcating, the organisation is of magnificent service to the young. All Englishmen who love sport must praise the efforts and the results. It is precisely the training of character that the Fascists now seek, in decisive contra-distinction to, and contradiction of, intellect. They have come to despise brain, or rather too much brain, or rather too much anti-Fascist brain. They worship character; that was precisely what the Gentile reforms of the educational system set out also to produce in their own way. The Fascist qualification of the Englishman's sponsorship of education and sport for character is the one Englishmen have hitherto decisively abominated, namely that only one type of character is valuable. Character in the English sense, has hitherto meant independence in creation and daring. But the Fascist character must prove itself in *obedience*. If there is any free play for the free character, it is within the framework and the maze of Fascist principle and derivation. To make sure that the young men, who are being taught their pre-military exercises and athletics, shall acquire the character "traditionally Fascist," the organisation provides for Spiritual-Cultural Education. Thus:

"The National Balilla work has further the object of forming the conscience and the mind of those who will be the Fascists of to-morrow, of those who will be the future governing class. It can very efficaciously act in this sense because it brings together the young, whose spirit it is easy to mould by means of an assiduous and vigilant spiritual novitiate. To meet this necessity, the Opera establishes schools of cultural preparation, and centres of study and propaganda. In such schools for the young, there must be expounded the Fascist doctrine in its logical development and its historical function."

There is nothing as good as the Dictatorship. This work is energetically conducted by a host of people (in 1932, 50,000 officers, instructors, cadets, centurion chiefs, chiefs of squads; 3,500 medical, sanitary and consulting officers; 2,000

chaplains), most giving their services gratuitously under the general direction of a trustee especially nominated by the President of the Provincial Committee of the Balilla.[1] The essence of this instruction lies in proving the historical and logical necessity for Italy, and even for the world, of a dictatorial system of government. Naturally the term Dictatorship, which has unpleasant associations, is less used, if at all, than the terms Totalitarian, or Ethical, or Corporative State, which have inspiring, majestic, philanthropic sounds, and the word Leader is more seductive than Dictator. The pupils are not confronted with the choice, and the reasons for the choice, between the best democracies and the best dictatorships, but with a comparison between the worst and rawest democracies and the highest destinies of man as conceived by Fascists, and, of course, the gulf can then be seen by the veriest idiot. There is no one present to correct the distortions of the theory of democracy, or the scandalising accounts given of its operation in other countries, and of its actual services to Italy from 1870 to 1922.

For example, the parliamentary system of Italy until 1922 is thus described :

" Before the Fascist revolution, Italian citizens who were interested in the national political life, instead of concentrating all their forces in one single association, were divided into various parties, according to their diverse opinions and aspirations. There were conservative parties which gathered together the persons whose interests were the better served by the existing laws, and who therefore did not wish to change them. There were radical parties who—composed in great part by discontented persons—hoped for a radical change of legislation and the social order. Political elections were conducted in such a way that each party could send to Parliament a certain number of Deputies. That party which in the elections received a greater number of votes, was represented in Parliament by a greater number of Deputies. Such a Parliament, formed by persons who had ideas too divergent to come to a speedy agreement, made few laws, and was often the occasion of scandal for tumultuous and useless discussions. In the same Chamber were represented even parties who wished to destroy the National State, and to abolish private property."[2]

[1] Particulars in *Il Capo Centuria*, 1934. Cf. also *L'Opera Balilla alla fine dell' anno X*, 1932 (Ministero dell' Educazione Nazionale). There are regular Bulletins.

[2] *Capo Centuria*, 142.

The essential dishonesty of this account, superficially true, is shocking. What is even more vicious is the failure to represent the Parliamentary system as the proper controller of the administrative authorities, the forum of opinion, the safeguard against illegality and unwisdom in the executive, the centre of liberty of thought.

Comradeship. Thus comradeship is a splendid offspring of human nature, but when the *Capo Centuria* explains it (p. 17) it is thus distorted:

"The thought of belonging to such a great organisation, of all serving the cause of the *Fascist Revolution*, of all aiming at the same end: the *greatness of the Fatherland*, must bind in a strong sentiment of genuine fraternity all the young black shirts."

Why not the comradeship of common interests, ambitions, purposes, spontaneously surging up and being fostered by free friendships?

Obedience. Thus, also, obedience has its value and purpose, but the Fascist singles it out and deprives it of the qualifications due to the growing, developing, creative being. He says (p. 12): "Obedience is the characteristic of the strong,[1] and the infallible sign borne by him who is born to command,[1] and the finest quality of every fighter at the service of an idea." Surely, however, only of the idea to which one subjects oneself, or which has proved to be the best that human beings can conceive, after the fiercest discussion of comparative merits? Moreover, any child with sense is sure to learn in time that Mussolini has become commander not by obeying but by disobeying.

Order. Then comes the subtle persuasion, as it seems to me, of the notion of Order (p. 12):

"Order may be thus defined: 'Each thing in its place; a place for each thing.' Order is the element which marks the place of every individual, every army, every people, in the hierarchy of values; it is the most formidable arm of unsubdued wills. Those armies are victorious which carry an idea on the point of their bayonets. We carry the idea of order, rank, authority of the State, against the suicidal theory of disorder, indiscipline, and irresponsibility."

[1] Notice the flattery!—AUTHOR.

To appreciate the effect of this on young minds it must be remembered that the lesson is driven home by practical exercises, chiefly military, with an emphasis on the primacy of Italy in all fields, and that alternative versions of the idea are not discussed at the classes, while their discussion elsewhere, as we have shown, may easily be crime. I shall not pretend that all that Fascism teaches is evil, for, as I have already indicated, there are moral values in faith, submission to the community, and discipline. What is noxious above all, is its method, with fear and obscurantism as the ultimate sanctions. Hence, Fascism teaches youth rules of good conduct which are rightly taught everywhere,[1] as, for example, not to be destructive of private or public property, to give one's seat in trams to women and older people, to keep the rules in sport and not attempt to win by cheating or taking advantage of the weakness of rivals, not to be too ready to charge others with breaking the rules. And again "not to be a spy for insignificant things, but to let the superior know immediately any serious offence by comrades which he by himself cannot stop; to speak only when he is certain that there is no mistake, and to assume all the responsibility for whatever he says."

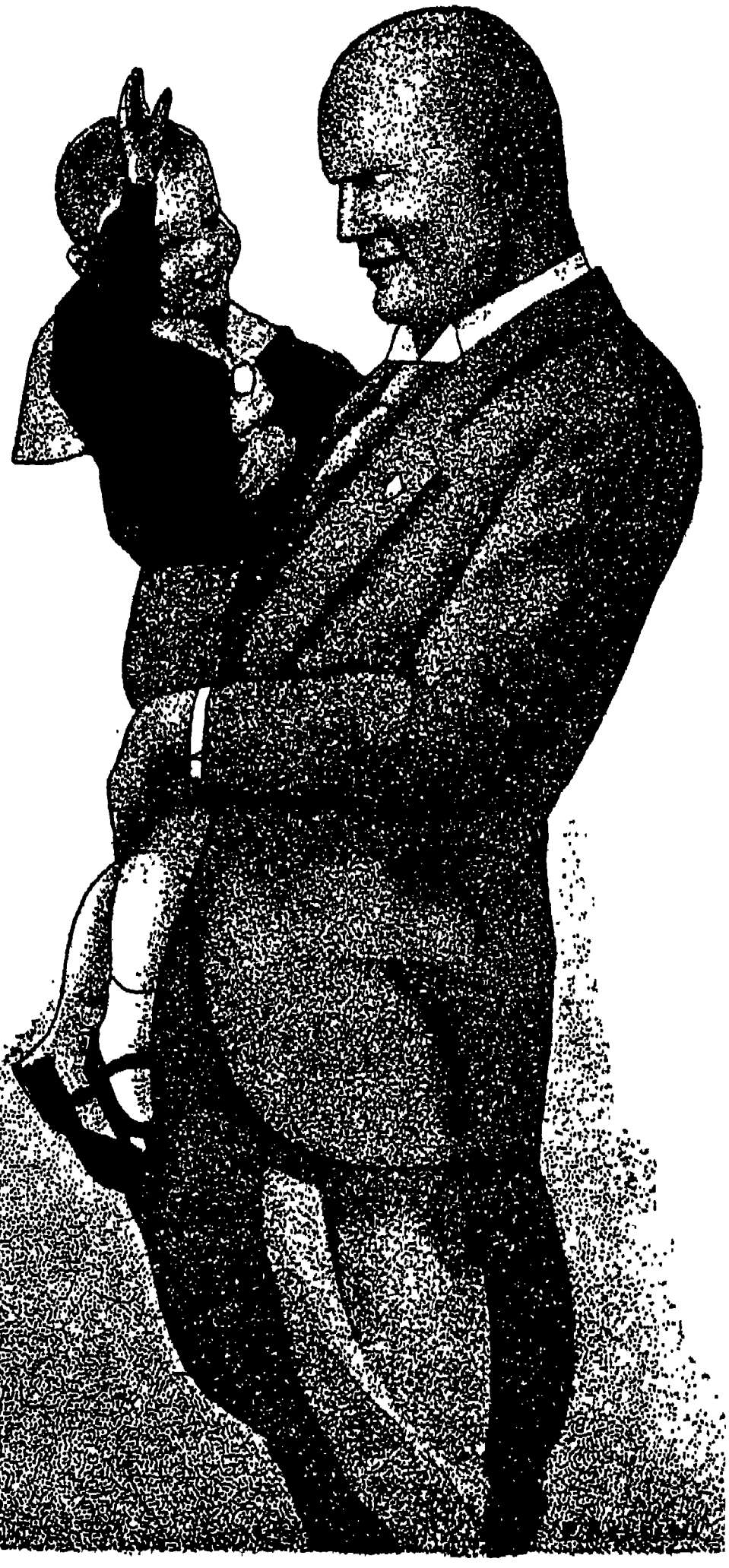
Compulsory Blindness. Yet there are other things not so praiseworthy, which may prove damaging to Italy in the long run if they are obeyed. For example :

"Do not forget that Italy has permitted you to go to foreign countries, so that you shall learn that amount that one *can* learn, even from other Nations. Observe therefore with attention, and respect the fine things which you see abroad ; *but do not forget the primacy which Italy holds in all fields* ; do not make yourself a nuisance by continually expressing comparisons to the advantage of Italy ; that would be contrary to rules of hospitality. But in your heart make these comparisons, whenever they are justified. If foreigners want to draw you into political discussions, briefly make your profession of political faith, so as to show that you are convinced and politically educated ; but avoid as much as possible your judgement of the institutions and customs of the country in which you are a guest."

The virtues of faith and obedience, which have their claims on all of us in their proper proportions, are given absolute values.

[1] These are summarised in *Il Capo Centuria*, 1934, pp. 6–10.

BENITO MUSSOLINI
ama molto i bambini.
I bimbi d'Italia amano
molto il Duce.



VIVA IL DUCE!

Saluto al Duce:

A noi!

FROM AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEXT-BOOK

The Duce is God. Naturally, the elevation of the Duce above all other men, not only of Italy to-day, but of all places and all times, proceeds gaily, rhapsodically, on a ladder of propositions which would not be tenable in any free discussion for longer than the time they take to utter. *Imitatio Mussolini* has cast out *Imitatio Christi*. But it is a consequence of the Fascist system that the inner travail of Mussolini on his road to success cannot possibly be reproduced as an example, because the conditions under which the spiritual struggle was possible and necessary no longer exist. Only the violent, theatrical, table-thumping exterior remains for imitation.

Religion. In this background the arrangements for religious instruction and assistance cannot be other than blasphemy. For what does it avail a boy or a girl to be spoken to by the chaplains provided for each cohort in terms of the Prince of Peace, the Son of God who let Himself be Crucified to save others, and the gentle Madonna—what meaning can this have when more than 90 per cent of his time is spent in learning the meaning of virility, energy, ambition, conquest, and the totalitarian service to the Duce? What can he think, if he can think at all, of the Chaplain, complete in robes and flat hat, who solemnly gives the benediction of the Church to his standard, which is the symbol of a faith beginning and ending with the nobility and inevitability of war? If religious instruction meant anything at all the boy, in consistency, would abhor Fascism and all its works. The spiritual values of Fascism and those of Catholicism are in all things opposed.

Avanguardia. Now the training of the Avanguardia which I have thus sketched applies to the real Balilla, that is those between the ages of eight and fourteen, save that there is less severity in the exercises, and more gentleness in the admonitions and punishments. But all are brought to an attachment to the banners of their district, the flag of the country, loyalty to the Duce, and the King and Queen, preparedness to defend the interests of their country, and the drilling, singing, and semi-military evolutions under orders, with a knowledge of warlike weapons and sometimes exercises which include them, which

at once improve their bodies and make them abler to render the services which the Dictator may one day command.

Balilla. The purpose of the Balilla Institute, that there shall be a centre, a Casa Balilla, in every commune in the country, is within sight of complete realisation. The Casa Balilla has become the local club of Italian youth, and there are no others. The name Balilla, which may sound strange to English ears, has an historic origin, and it is best, perhaps, given in the words of the text-book of the Third Class of the Elementary Schools. The story is introduced in the Text as a lesson that breaking windows with stones is an action beneath contempt, because throwing stones *can* be really heroic!

"With a stone," sneers the master, "you wanted to break a miserable street lamp! With a stone Balilla made cannon silent, what a difference! There was a boy in Genoa, a painter's boy, at the time when the Austrians ruled and tortured the city and its inhabitants. His name was Giovanni Battista Perasso, surnamed Balilla. One day, December 5th, 1746, some Austrian soldiers were dragging a mortar along ["a short heavy cannon," explains the master]. All at once the mortar sank in the mud and the soldiers, in spite of all their strength, failed to pull it out. Then, arrogantly as was their custom, they turned to the people to assist them. You know well, boys, that no man, woman, youngster or child would help to save the weapons turned against their own country. You can imagine the Italians!"

Then the masters embroider this part of the story, working up feelings of revolt in the children. One boy says, if the Italians had no arms why didn't they throw stones?

Socratissimo thereupon brings out a trump card.

"You're right there, my boy. In fact, when a cruel officer caned a passer-by, there in the district of Portoria, where the mortar had sunk, suddenly up leaped Balilla. Furious, he picked up a stone, and in his dialect he shouted out as loudly as he could: 'Who'll smash 'em?' And with the same power that the small David slung the stone against the giant Goliath, he threw a rock against the enemy official. It was the sign of revolt. The people armed, fought with stones, sticks, weapons of all kinds, and after five days (just

like the five days of Milan), Genoa had cast out the enemy from its ancient and glorious soil."

"Voluntary" Membership. Membership of the Balilla is voluntary, that is to say, the State does not legally *force* children to belong; and they may join only if the consent of the parents or guardians is given. After the age of sixteen, entrants must present their certificate of good conduct, obtainable at the Podestà's office. The local organisers are usually the school-teachers, and the local delegates have their offices and their registers in the schools.

The numbers are interesting. We give them from 1929 to the most recent available:

	Dec. 1929	Dec. 1930	Dec. 1931	Oct. 1932	Oct. 28th 1933	Population, census 1931 April[1]
Balilla	856,814	981,947	1,430,403	1,427,318	1,559,106	2,252,331
Avanguardisti	344,844	371,529	439,871	410,239	442,223	1,498,438
Piccole Italiane	418,691	670,183	1,186,569	1,184,424	1,319,753	3,061,330
Giovane Italiane	60,605	98,002	92,282	119,344	125,067	1,475,272

What do these numbers mean? One thing is strikingly clear, that, since the population between the age of eight and eighteen is about 7¼ million, only about 50 per cent of the children up to the age of eighteen have joined. Young Italian working class girls have no time or interest for the movement. The rich and middle-class children are there in overwhelming majority.

How far does membership represent conviction? Now membership is legally voluntary, but a number of factors combine to make a steady flow of members certain. First, there are the efforts of the teachers. The Fascist teachers belong to the Fascist Association of Teachers, and, apart from their general responsibilities as members of the Party, have the special responsibility of securing the triumph of the Fascist State. They do not organise the Avanguardisti, who come under the Militia, but they are the authorities over Balilla, and those of them who are also members of the Militia receive preference in office, which means a little extra pay.

[1] At the appropriate ages.

It is to their interest and prestige to obtain the largest possible number of members. Teachers have a great power in this regard, if they care to use it.

The greatest difficulties are experienced in recruiting those between fourteen and eighteen. One million of the one-and-half million of the boys are not interested enough to find the small fee that is necessary, and the time for the teaching, parades, and so on. *They are mainly working-class children.* Not many are refused by the authorities, though they insist on a *choice,* and dangerous, " unreliable " (delicious word, which is not unknown in England) youngsters are kept out. The authorities passionately want numbers. It is true that the Party prefers that admission into the organisation shall appear rather as a gift to a good boy or girl for qualities worthy of reward than as a duty forced upon the children. Even this can be applied by teachers so that few children shall be excluded, and the numbers on the register become a matter for pride.

Secondly, there are advantages if one is a member. There are many scholarships and prizes in the gift of the organisation, *and all organisations which have funds for such purposes at their disposal are obliged to give timely notice to the Balilla organisation;* and there are provisions whereby these organisations may be induced to alter their rules in order that the members of the Balilla may get the preference. Nor is that all. The needy members are given eleemosynary aid: food, clothing, and books. There are excursions, and seaside and mountain summer camps,[1] cruises, and visits to places of cultural or recreational interest, either gratuitous or at greatly reduced prices. There are schools of arts and crafts, agriculture (experimental plots have been provided), swimming, sailing, aviation. There are free libraries. Those who rise to be little leaders—good Fascist boys and girls —can have considerable advantages of this sort, and have a splendid start for their ultimate career, whatever form it may take. For the orphans and the sick there is special care; for the rural areas there are entertainments which cannot be otherwise brought out to the hamlets by private enterprise—it is the ambition to have a cinema in every Casa di Balilla in the country. For the coastal areas there are special schools for naval

[1] In 1933, 1,781, with nearly 350,000 children from one to three months.

instruction. For all, there are certain remissions upon apprenticeship to trades and professions.

Is it any wonder that the children flock into the organisation ? or that, things being as they are in Italy, it is wise for their parents to let them do so ? Especially in times of unemployment, in a country where unemployment relief applies only to a third of those unemployed, and even then is very niggardly, with no allowances for the children ? In addition, children join because others join. They do not like being different from the rest, especially when the difference is marked by the pretty little uniform, and participation in school and recreational ceremonies. It is not so much that they want to be the same as others, as that they do not wish to be different. And from the earliest contact with school, from the time when the first lessons in spelling and writing are taken, the children are confronted with the Fascist State and the Balilla organisation. Later, we shall glance through the Elementary Text-books, since 1927 State-prescribed, written to the State's order, and compulsory and uniform throughout Italy.

In the schools are read out the anecdotes about the brave actions of Balilla and the Little Italian Girls, which besides get great prominence in the newspapers as the act of "Balilla," not, mark you, the act of a boy or a girl (as though the heroism must *necessarily* be attributed to membership of this Fascist organisation) and also in the fortnightly *Bollettino dell' Opera Nazionale Balilla.* The astuteness of the régime is particularly noticeable and noteworthy in matters of this kind : the exploitation of the best in human nature for its own purposes. It is undeniable also that it is a service to civilisation that noble deeds should be widely reported and become general examples. When these things are exploited, however, a bitter taste is left in the mouth.

The Family Surrenders. It is no wonder, therefore, that the numbers in the Balilla are large ; the wonder is that they are not larger. There are many parents who must send their children into the Balilla because their own professional position obliges them to do so. This may seem a terrible abdication of responsibility. Yet let them call it by this name, who have never had

thrust upon them the choice between conformity and trying to find an alternative to the Italian prisons in the dispassionate welcome of foreign lands. The parents conform but keep their children away from the rites and ceremonies as much as they can, and discreetly counteract the teaching at home. The parents, however, fight a losing battle. The Party will treat the children kindly, on condition that they are surrendered to a conception of life and of the State which is not acceptable to their parents. This moral kidnapping being effected, not by intellectual persuasion—what child up to the age of eighteen can form an intellectual conception of modern political rights and wrongs ?—but by non-rational seductions, is the more complete since it is a process of excising the reasoning brain. The only salvation, from the standpoint of freedom of mind, is that the lessons are, after all, book and oral lessons ; and the onset of passion and experience in later life may refute them, and out of reflection on their exploitation when they were children the future adults may wreak their revenge with the enthusiasm of converts. But, at any rate for the time being, the Party has these children by the throat, though it merely seems to be tickling them.

The Oath. All the pressure which is brought to bear on Youth in Italy is raised to its final and most intense efficiency in the Oath, the most primitive, permanent, and non-rational mode of coercion, except physical violence, known to the human race. In the Manual for the children between eight and fourteen the Fascist Oath is reproduced, and then follows the comment :

" The Fascist who swears no longer belongs to himself but to the Duce and to the cause of the Revolution, even as, for the Duce and the Revolution, died the three thousand Fascist Martyrs."

In the Manual for the Avanguardisti, the comment runs :

" The oath is the solemn act of our will, whereby we bind all our future as men of honour to a promise made. Its importance increases with the importance of the idea for which we take the oath. We swear not to belong to ourselves, but to the Duce and the cause of the Fascist Revolution. The oath when taken lasts all our life long,

and the martyrs who immolated their existence for an oath taken, illuminating us, guide us."

Every opportunity is taken to remind the children of the binding self-annihilating effect of the oath, so that it shall act as a permanent inhibition on the awakening intelligence. The *conspiratorial* value of the oath is used as a device to secure conformity of behaviour. The oath is printed on their membership tickets—that same ticket which entitles them to scholarships, medical assistance, and so on. A delightful combination—business with pleasure.

The Ten Commandments of the Fascist Fighter.

There have been several attempts to condense the Fascist Idea, which does not exist, or rather too many versions of which exist, into a Decalogue. One of these which is now, apparently, superseded was composed and promulgated by Signor Giuriati, then Secretary of the Party, in September 1931. It ran :

"1. God and Fatherland : all other affections and duties come after these ;

"2. Whoever is not ready to give himself body and soul for his country, and to serve the Duce without discussion, is not worthy of wearing the Black Shirt. Fascism repudiates lukewarm faith and half-characters ;

"3. Use your intelligence to understand the orders that you receive and all your enthusiasm for obedience ;

"4. Discipline is not only a virtue of the soldiers in the ranks, it must also be the practice of every day and all circumstances ;

"5. A bad child and a negligent student are not Fascists ;

"6. Organise your time in such a way that work will be a joy, and your games, work ;

"7. Learn to suffer without complaining, to give without asking, to serve without waiting for a reward ;

"8. Good actions, like actions in a war, must not be done by halves : carry them to their extreme consequences ;

"9. In actual circumstances, remember that the good lies in audacity ;

"10. And thank God every day for having made you Fascist and Italian."

These comparatively mild exhortations have been replaced by the following Ten Commandments, published so often, diffused so widely, that no eyes can escape them:

"1. Know that the Fascist and in particular the soldier, must not believe in perpetual peace.

"2. Days of imprisonment are always deserved.

"3. The nation is also served even as sentinel over a can of petrol.

"4. A companion must be a brother, first, because he lives with you, and secondly because he thinks like you. [*Notice how the question is begged!*]

"5. The rifle and cartridge belt, and the rest, are confided to you not to be ruined in leisure, but to be preserved for war.

"6. Do not ever say 'The Government will pay' . . . because it is *you* who pay; and the Government is that which you willed to have, and for which you put on a uniform. [*Notice how the question is begged!*]

"7. Discipline is the soul of armies: without it, there are no soldiers, but only confusion and defeat.

"8. *Mussolini is always right!*

"9. For a volunteer there are no extenuating circumstances when he is disobedient. [*Notice the suggestion that the youngsters* are *volunteers!*]

"10. One thing must be dear to you above all: the life of the Duce."

Girls and Women. Until 1930, the Little and the Young Italian Girls were organised under the Party, as the feminine counterpart of the Balilla. Then they were transferred to the Institution. They are also divided into the two groups of ages —the Little Italian Girls from six to fourteen—and they also have their organisation throughout the land, governed and assisted by the Women Fasci, in the main teachers or well-off ladies who have had a special training at the School at Orvieto. Their object is not, of course, to provide fighters, but to provide the mothers and teachers of good Fascists, who, first among other things, will be fighters. Mussolini's own mother was a woman of the Roman kind, the comforter, educator, the servant of the hearth and home. So he wished all Italian women

to be formed on the antique model. The spirit of the organisation owes much to him. Let us reproduce the characterisation of the Fascist woman which appeared in the preamble to the Rules :

"To prepare worthily for life the future mother of the family of new generations ; to make of her a perfect mistress of the home, not only in the practical activities of everyday life, but also in the affirmation of a spirit profoundly Fascist ; to assist the progress of the young woman towards charm and beauty ; to realise her rich and fresh energies in the domain best adapted to her ends and means, so as to form a creature endowed with the regenerative powers indispensable to the progress of the family, and thereby to the strengthening of the nation in the spiritual atmosphere of the régime."

They are treated to a course of education in the four branches, Civic, Domestic, Fascist Culture, and Physical. In general character, this follows what we have said about the education of the Balillas above.

The Balilla pay an annual fee of five lire (at 60 lire to the £, the equivalent of 1*s.* 8*d.*) each. This provides some 15 million lire (£250,000) a year ; the State provides another 30 million (£500,000). There are donations by those who wish to be members and fellows of the Institute, and, from time to time, gifts in kind, like land, houses, pictures, equipment, uniforms, flags, and the rest. But these, apparently, were more frequent and substantial before the full onset of the economic crisis.

There is little denial that a serious military purpose is served by the Youth Organisations. Mussolini has made that perfectly clear all along, and nowhere more than in his most recent speeches. Yet the Youth organisations are also regarded as the organs of democratic social services, of education and general physical assistance to large masses of the working classes. There is no doubt, of course, that their welfare work is much needed, valuable, and appreciated.

Wolf Cubs. The latest stage in the manufacture of this vast complete Fascist ferro-concrete container of humanity, is the establishment of a Wolf-Cub organisation for children

FROM AN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL TEXT-BOOK

between six and eight. The Duce, on November 3rd, 1934, directed that the new organisation should be pre-eminently recreational, " consonantly with the very tender age of these new recruits to Fascism." There will be " easy games, elementary rhythmic gymnastics, little walks," (" into my parlour," said the Spider to the Fly). There is to be particular care for the necessitous and ailing.

How pleased are the régime and its supporters by these developments " of genius," as the journalists have it. As they look down on the Camp " Dux " at Rome, and see the thirty-two Legions of Avanguardisti marching by, the journalist points the moral (*Corriere*, September 12th, 1934) :

" All this is the more marvellous when we remember the individualist, anarcoid and indisciplined character of our children in the past, too often educated in the family in the traditional arts of getting-on and then corrupted at school, where the teaching of cultural subjects was never accompanied by an appropriate moral education. The adolescents of those days were sceptical from the beginning, and ended as youth faded, and without ideals. It needed all the profound moral health of the Italian people to save, at least in certain classes, that sense of love of country and will to act which produced intervention in the War and Fascism. . . . For it is not enough to foment the fighting spirit of individuals, it is not enough to train them materially in military exercises ; it is necessary to accustom them to regard military duties as ' normal ' and ' continuous ' and even as pre-eminent among all the other duties of the citizen, however important and complex. Only thus, preparing the new generation over a long term, can we make of Italy a nation pre-eminently militarist, as are, even when they will not admit it, all the great nations who have any real weight in international life."

The Young Fascists. Thus Italian youth from the age of six to eighteen is handed over to the Party and the Fascist State. The Secretary of the Party tells us that *experience*, which he does not explain, demonstrated the necessity of new provisions regarding those between eighteen and twenty-one.[1]

" The vigilant eyes and the great heart of Benito Mussolini could not fail to see : that it was necessary not to abandon the young

[1] Starace, *Fasci Giovanili di Combattimento*, 1933, p. 14.

(*precious phrase!*) at the age of eighteen to the influence of the passions proper to that age of change; that the subsequent three years, from eighteen to twenty-one, is, in the majority of cases, the most critical period for the formation of a mind and conscience; the aims of life are marked out and fixed at that age; that while opening membership of the Party to those between eighteen and twenty-one, they lacked, especially those not coming from the ranks of the Balilla, educational assistance conducing to the ends of the régime: and in order the better to mould and temper to the labour of life all our young, the better to bring them to the realisation of the soundness of the faith, proposes to the Grand Council the constitution of Young Fasci of Fighters."

Mussolini declared, further, that the passage from category to category, from Balilla to adult Fascist, must not be considered as automatic and attainable by simple seniority, but must represent a recognition of proved faith and work in the life of the régime.

The spirit of the Young Fascist organisation, which received its first contingents from the Avanguardisti on the anniversary of the Italian victory (November 4th) in 1930, was expressed in Mussolini's allocution to them, on the Campidoglio, thus:

"Fascist, Young Black Shirts!

"To-day you have the great fortune and the supreme privilege of taking the oath to the cause of the Fascist Revolution and the Fatherland.[1]

"You do this on this memorable day because it recalls the glorious October and November of 1918, when the Italian armies destroyed for always the enemy forces.

"You do this on this sacred hill in the history of Rome, of Italy, and the civilised world. At this moment another 250,000 Young Fascists are raising their hands to repeat the same oath.

"When your older comrades were fighting, and shedding their blood in the battle to win the victory, you could not then be among them. To-day they receive you with open heart and the profoundest good-will. Pronouncing the oath you are fulfilling one among the most solemn acts of your life. Remember that they who deny the oath will be beaten by the axe of the lictor as traitors.

"Remember also that Fascism does not promise you honours, or jobs, or rewards, but only duty and fighting."

[1] Observe! "Supreme privilege"! Mussolini is *giving* them something. They ought, therefore, to be grateful!

As though these terrifying objurgations to youths of eighteen were insufficient (and they reveal more clearly than description can the latent but ready terror which can be unleashed), the Secretary of the Party hastens to impress those who have come under his charge that the Young Fascists and their educators had better engrave well in their minds these words, and the sanctity of an oath.

The Statute of the Young Fascists, begins with the words: *Believe, Obey, Fight.* The Duce is recognised as the inventor of the idea, "for the spiritual continuity of the Revolution." The Young Fascist organisation is, through a selective process of moral, spiritual, and military (war like) education, to constitute the fertile nursery for the ranks of the Party and the Militia. Admittance into the Young Fasci is through the ranks of the Youth Organisations, and comes as a prize conceded by the Duce to citizens worthy thereof, by both faith and works!

The usual Roman military formation obtains. The Secretary of the Party is the Commandant, responsible to the Duce for the perfect efficiency of the institution. In the intermediate ranges of the commands, the Federal Secretaries of the Party have the rank equivalent to their place in the Party. The officers are members of the Militia: "Fascists of early date, of unimpeachable morality, of proved intellectual, organising and progagandising capacity." Fitted into the organisation are sports experts.

What, then, is wanted of these young men?

> "The Young Fascist is the expression of the new Italy. He offers himself to make himself worthy of that which the preceding generation did in the War and the Revolution, preparing himself to continue the action. He tempers all enthusiasms in iron discipline, perfects his own moral, social, and political position, makes robust his body and mind, despises peril, loves bravery, serves with faith, with passion and happiness, the Cause of Fascism."

Then, if he is worthy, in these terms, at the age of twenty-one, he will be rewarded with the membership card of the National Fascist Party and, if extraordinarily "safe," will be admitted into the Militia. His worth is shown by subordination and discipline.

"Discipline is the moral habit through which the Young Fascist executes always and everywhere, with intelligence and cheerfulness, even, and above all, when it costs sacrifice and renunciation, the orders of those who are invested with the functions of command."

He must submit to the superior grade, and observe all the related duties. If incorrigible, or not amenable to discipline, or work-shy, or of "bad moral and political conduct," he will be expelled. If guilty of any of the major heresies against Fascism, or condemned for infamous crime, he may be degraded and, then, like the adult Fascist who is expelled from the Party, he is banned from public life. Young Fascists have the usual duties of wearing a prescribed uniform on prescribed occasions, of saluting in the Roman style, and of taking part in all the Fascist ceremonies and reviews. Their commanders should gather them in large numbers, well-organised according to plans laid down in the Regulations, so that the meetings shall be "truly expressions of power." Many, indeed many, are the complaints of Federal Secretaries of non-attendance at meetings! There are special colours on the uniforms for individuals who have shown distinction on occasions of calamity, or collective acts of human solidarity or value, and to the best Federal Command of the year is given, on the anniversary of the March on Rome, *the Duce's Prize.*

The round of the Young Fascists' life is made up of meetings, gymnastic and athletic instruction, and exercises according to the first year of the pre-military course. They have shooting practice on the ranges. They are trained together in flying columns on bicycle, motor-cycle, motor-car, and horses. Up in the mountains they will be taught ski-ing, and the craft of mountain climbing; on the coast, naval tactics and science. The practical exercises and the lectures and talks are all adapted to two purposes, to fit the young men for combat, in body and mind, and to fit them to fight in defence of *Fascist* orders on behalf of the nation. War, war and war again! The wars of the past, the daily battle of Fascism, the war that, according to the Duce's theories, is inevitably coming! The glory of war! the glory of sacrifice! the worthlessness of life unless lived for ends outside oneself, in this case best represented by the Duce, who alone

was able to understand the destiny of Italy, and to sweep away the people who misunderstood and mishandled it. The virtue of bravery, energy and combat ! The exploitation of every human act, as an example in some way substantiating the value of the Fascist conception of life. An incessant round, an unbreakable chain of Duce, machine-guns, machine-guns, Duce ! Because there were sacrifices, there must be sacrifices ! Because there was violence, there must continue to be violence ! Because there were martyrs, there must be more of them, so that the memory of those of the past shall not be forgotten ! Because the purple blood was spilt, it must be freshened with the blood of more young deaths !

The piping times of peace might cause the minds of men to turn too much towards peaceful tasks of construction, and in this way a certain stagnation of the spirit of youth might result. Oh, fearful prospect ! Then bring them into the fields on their holidays, and week-ends and free evenings. Drag them out of the brothels ! Warn them against love-making and mistresses ! Fight venereal disease ! Merge them into the Militia, which will teach them a sterner creed. They are obliged to frequent the pre-military courses of the Militia. And, if by chance all these methods should not be enough, even religious assistance, in the form of chaplains, can be exploited to the great end. The Secretary of the Party says : " Religious assistance is valuable through its rites, in reviving and in reinforcing the sense of the divine and the spirit of sacrifice. The religious sentiment, properly understood and properly directed, is always a potent force for the elevation of the customs of a people."[1]

One or two numbers of the *Gioventù Fascista*, the fortnightly journal of the organisation, reveal the mind of young men which the Party evidently believes is to be its own salvation and the glory of Italy's future.

Mussolini always appears in a large photograph on the front page. He is always dressed in a different uniform or costume, often on horseback, and carrying out some symbolic civil or military function : reviewing the troops, or surveying the athletes, or sowing or reaping corn, or what not. His autograph

[1] p. 27.

always appears: "Believe, Obey, Fight!—Mussolini." Around him there are always a group of lieutenants, suitably garbed; and around this group, a crowd of frenzied, yelling enthusiastic youngsters. Violent movement of some sort convulses them. They are marching with fixed bayonets, or blowing trumpets; they are racing along on motor-cycles, or wrestling, or boxing, or fencing, or swarming over fields. A phrase, or longer excerpt, from a speech by Mussolini is quoted; and this furnishes the keynote for the number. The editor and his staff get to work, embroidering it, pointing morals, adorning tales. Photographers of the constructive social work of the régime show that Italy is worth fighting for, and that it is an honour of no mean sort to belong to the Fascist Party. As I looked over the numbers with a Fascist friend, a Fascist "of the first hour" he claimed to be, he grinned like a man who has just concluded a very, very good bargain and has the profits safe in his pocket, and observed, "You see! That is how we get them!"

The athletes have an additional oath: "I will fight to triumph over all obstacles, to win all the championships, with vigour on the field of physical contest, with wisdom in debate. I will fight to win in the name of Italy. I will fight as the Duce commands me. I swear it."

Numbers. Now there are about 1,250,000 young men between eighteen and twenty-one in Italy. There are about 660,000 Young Fascists, and 67,000 University Fascists (covering roughly the same group age). Hence only about 50 per cent are members of the organisation: what accounts for the 50 per cent who are not in the organisation? Some are excluded by the recruiting authorities on grounds of health and "moral and political fitness." Many are excluded by reason of their occupations, especially in the agricultural districts which the organisation cannot reach, or where the sons are too much needed to allow for the absences required. Others remain outside from apathy; others again because they despise the political purpose of the organisation; and more remain outside because they want to pursue their own interests and recreation in their own way.

The University Fascists. These are groups of undergraduates from the age of eighteen and post graduates not above twenty-eight years of age. The groups come under the control of the Secretary of the Party. They

> " live on the Idea, which guided to sacrifice the 600,000 dead in the Great War and the volunteers who offered themselves for the National Cause : they consecrate themselves to the ideals which the Duce marks out for the Italians, and consider it their particular honour to dedicate themselves to every activity of the régime—first among all, that of the elevation and the organisation of the forces of Youth."

They come from the Avanguardia or Young Fascists. From twenty-one to twenty-eight they are members of the Party. The Secretary of the Group is nominated by the Federal Secretary (the Rector of the University having first been consulted), and appointed by the Secretary of the Party. The Secretary of the Group chooses his Directorate and the Federal Secretary appoints.

We have already said a great deal about the University Groups in the general discussion of the place of Youth in the Fascist régime. For it is to the Universities that Fascism particularly looks for its governing class of the future, and the perpetuation and renewal of its doctrine. It does this, not simply because there lies its securest hope, but because the young men of the Universities demand that a practical answer shall be given to their demand for a place in society, a livelihood, power, a vocation, and so on. The interests of régime and University are therefore very closely interlocking. Mussolini gave University youth their motto : " *Libro e moschetto, Fascista perfetto.*" " Book and rifle make the perfect Fascist." They are kept loyal by all sorts of rewards (we gave the example of the *Littoriali*), and, what is more, by the hope of jobs. I can vouch for it, from personal experience, that those who are members of the University Groups are kept dangling like agitated puppets by the queerest collection of wires ever seen—of little jobs and errands (parades, demonstrations, apprenticeship at the office of the Federal Secretary, tours given as prizes for essays and the like, running newspapers, kitchens, charity organisations, minor

journalism, minor lecturing and speech-making, military exercises) and the alternate hopes and fears, hot and cold by turn, of a future dependent upon success in competition with their "comrades" in attracting the favourable attention of their superiors. All this in a system where comradeship must always be at least outwardly professed.

Libro e Moschetto, the University Fascists' weekly journal, published in Milan, is extremely interesting as a mirror of the ideas and demands of this special constituency. It is against snobbery, clamant for opportunities, the enemy of privilege and intrigues which would close the career to talents. It is remarkable still to find protests at "small and large camorras" who are able to make away with the jobs! The journal is more honest and sober than the rest. Certainly no contrast could be greater than between its sobriety, though it is firmly loyal, and the hysterical dope handed out in *Gioventù Fascista* which is the Party's journal for the working classes between eighteen and twenty-one. This is quite a remarkable sign of the class differences still persisting in the régime. As becomes those with their way still to make, they are equalitarian and collectivist—at least now, young as they are, and by profession. They reproduce, for example, in the shoulders of their columns such quotations from Mussolini as this:

> "No longer an economic system which puts the accent on individual profit, but are concerned with the collective interest. If the past century was the century of the power of capital, the twentieth is that of the power and glory of labour."

The University Groups are also the principal incubators and sponsors of the vendetta against the "old men." It is here that one most frequently hears expressed the despair of the older generation from the Fascist standpoint, and the sanguine judgement that, after all, this does not matter because the Young are quite different, that they, at any rate, are and always will be Fascists. Yet this still has to stand the test of time and experience. That not all, or perhaps even a majority, hold the Fascist tenets with the inward intensity which makes of its beliefs an ineluctable course of actual behaviour, is shown by the frequent admonitions and sermons appearing in *Libro e Moschetto* about

the misdemeanours, the job hunting, and the personal advertisement and vanity, of which "comrades" become guilty. If the University Groups might be the stronghold of Fascism, they may also be its weakest link—they are learning to think, the libraries are open to them, discussion may be damped but it is not entirely put out. Hence the Dictator must be lavish with his gifts to the University Groups—scholarships, prizes, excursions and jobs.

It is, indeed, with a heartache that Mussolini labours to make the University Groups the vanguard of the attack on the bourgeois spirit. After ten years of undisputed power he is still obliged to make extraordinary admissions.

"Antifascism is finished. Its efforts are individual and more and more sporadic. The traitors, the vociferators, the cowardly, will be eliminated without pity. But yet one peril may menace the régime. This peril may be represented by that which is commonly called the 'bourgeois spirit,' a spirit, that is to say, of satisfaction and adaptation, a tendency to scepticism, to compromise, to a comfortable life, to careerism. The Fascist who has become bourgeois is he who believes that from now onwards there is nothing more to be done, that enthusiasm disturbs, that there are too many parades, that it is the hour to adjust one's self, that one child is enough, and I do not exclude the existence of bourgeois temperaments. I deny that they can be Fascist. The credo of the Fascist is heroism, that of the bourgeois is egoism. Against this peril there is only one remedy: the principle of the continuous revolution." (Quinquennial Assembly of the régime, March 18th, 1934.)

Yet that principle can hardly work through the Universities, for the students come, in the vast majority, from the bourgeoisie which produced the "revolution" as the means to defending its goods and its spirit.

Chapter XVI

SOCIAL POLICY

I

The Church

Twenty-three thousand Avanguardisti came in procession along the Via dell' Impero, in uniform and bearing rifles and machine-guns. Behind the band and the labarum of the Party, and in front of the Avanguardisti, marched the Chaplains, priests and monks, almost all of them wearing war decorations on their robes. A young Capucin wore the medal of the March on Rome. Mussolini stood taking the salute. With his stop watch, he was measuring the time taken to march and present arms.

When he saw the Chaplains, did his mind stray from the military and choreographic details, and reflect, " How miraculously I put the Roman Church into its right place ! " or did he think, " Have I ? " At any rate, he has tried to put the Church in its rightful place, that is as subordinate and more subservient to his own conception of life, Nation and State.

We have already noticed the tension between State and Church in Italy, the legacy of the Risorgimento. The State felt that it was in Rome on sufferance, without authority. Statesmen expressed the gnawing at their conscience in various ways. Cavour by his attempts for a " free Church in a free State " ; Giolitti in the policy that " the best thing for Church and State is to be like two parallel lines which never cross each other, never diverge, but never meet." The Church must be propitiated, persuaded to willing co-operation in the Italian State. Its temporal claims on Rome made the statesmen shamefaced. Its continued denials of the sovereignty of the House of Savoy made them feel usurpers. Its deep control of the hearts and minds of millions meant that if it were not reconciled to the State, one of two things would occur, either it would command the masses to

absent themselves from the State in silent resistance, or its more active spirits would use the masses to intervene in politics with a social policy purporting to be founded on "Catholic" principles, supported by the energy and crystalline distinctness of religious determination—the rise of the Partito Popolare was an example of this.

Mussolini's character and policy are absolutist in all respects: he claims all the masses all the time for all purposes: a united Italy in territory, authority, work and destiny. He is too shrewd to under-estimate the value for temporal purposes of religion. He is jealous of every vestige of legitimacy. He and his early friends, the Socialists, the Syndicalists, and the Futurists, were not only anti-clerical, but anti-Christians, Nietzscheans. He was all the more attracted by the views of his allies, the idealists and the Nationalists. From the former, and especially Gentile, he derived the emphasis that the Church and the religion had a right to live, first, because they were to some people vital ideas and part of the entire spiritual composition of the nation like all other manifestations of spiritual or artistic life, and secondly, because, historically and traditionally and personally, they were *Italians*. Of course they were but parts of the Nation, which was the supreme community. From the Nationalists, such as Rocco, Federzoni, and Nationalist Catholic modernists, came the emphasis on the spiritual values of the Church's millenary connection with Rome and the Empire. The Church was a precious gem in their collection, whose deep lustre enriched their present arguments with the mysticism whence issues obedience. As to the Church's modern antipathy to nationalism, imperialism, and their outcrops like the indoctrination of youth, the import of this was minimised, as events showed, wrongly.

The Fascists "Friends" of the Church. From the beginning, then, many Fascists were friendly to the Church, since, at the beginning, most of the Fascists were non-Socialists, non-Liberals. The crucifix appeared in schools again. The police authorities protected Catholic processions. The Fascist Party required the bishops to bless their standards. The Minister of Agriculture, Arpinati of Bologna (now languishing *in confino*) attended a Eucharistic Congress. And there was promise of more.

By 1926, the Church remained as the only great mass opposition in the moral sphere in Italy. It became Mussolini's ambition to overcome the ancient *dissidio*, by compensating the Church for the material wrongs done it, and attaching to his own use its power over the masses. The process of negotiation lasted three very difficult years.

The essential incompatibility of the mission of the State as conceived by Mussolini, Gentile and Rocco, with the mission of the Church as conceived by the authorities of the Roman Catholic Church, was revealed during the course of the negotiation by clashes between Fascist and Catholic Youth, which nearly wrecked them. Most grave of all was the affair of the Church's youth organisation, the *Esploratori Cattolici*, a species of Boy Scouts, whose parents naturally kept them out of the Fascist Balilla. Neither Mussolini nor the Secretaries of the Fascist Party could accept this aloofness from " the State." The Government decreed in January 1927 that only its Balilla could exist in cities of less than 20,000 inhabitants, and in March dissolved all the Catholic Youth organisations. This should have warned Pius XI of the temper of the power with whom he was dealing. Why then did he persist ? Like all the other authorities, party leaders, even nations, who have negotiated with modern Dictators, he believed that he could get for himself and his movement some special concessions out of friendship with the Dictator, hoping later to influence or outwit him. It seemed a salvation from an anti-clericalism more insidious and dangerous than ever before, and using the mailed fist on the slightest occasion. Then, too, the financial terms were tempting—regarded from the standpoint of the economic independence to carry on the universal mission which is the Church's. The Vatican bureaucracy and lay Churchmen, detesting the Liberal State which Fascism had overthrown, drew wool over their own eyes.

On February 11th, 1929, the agreements were signed. They included a Treaty, a Financial Convention and a Concordat. As Gentile said later, the State wanted the Treaty and so yielded the Concordat, while the Church wanted the Concordat and so yielded the Treaty. The soundness of this aphorism was proved very soon after the agreements were published.

The Treaty. In the Treaty,[1] the State recognises Catholicism as the religion of Italy—but does not impose it. It recognises the sovereignty of the Holy See over the "City of the Vatican," a minute district of Rome, and over its "subjects," or those having permanent residences in the City—about 400 people. Territorial immunity was granted to certain of the Churches outside the City of the Vatican. The Powers undertook to establish normal diplomatic relations and representation. The Holy See renounced admixture in "temporal competitions between the other States and at international conferences having such an object, unless all the contending parties make a common appeal to its mission," though it reserved its right "to make its moral and spiritual power prevail." Then, most important of all, the Holy See "declares definitively and irrevocably composed, and therefore eliminated, the Roman Question, and recognises the Kingdom of Italy under the dynasty of the House of Savoy with Rome as the capital of the Italian State." Italy, for her part, abrogates the Law of Guarantees of May 1871.

Concordat. In the Concordato, Italy promises to secure to the Church the freedom of the public exercise of the spiritual power and rites, as well as its jurisdiction in ecclesiastical matters. It would prevent happenings in Rome discordant with its sacred character as centre of the Catholic world. There would be a proper regulation of spiritual assistance for the armed forces of the State. On Sundays and feasts a prayer for the prosperity of King and Country would be recited at Mass. Religious marriage according to Canon Law is entitled to civil effects: "wishing to give back to the institution of matrimony, which is the basis of the family, a dignity conforming to the Catholic traditions of its people." And Mussolini later said that if this produced more children, so much the better! The State required that archbishops, bishops and coadjutors might not be appointed without the approval of the State, and must swear allegiance to Italy. All enjoying benefices must be approved by the Government, and be of Italian nationality. Bishops and parochial priests should know the Italian language.

[1] *Trattato fra la Santa Sede e l'Italia* (Government publication), 2nd edn., 1934

Religious Instruction. Of more importance were the arrangements regarding religious instruction. Already given in elementary schools, it would be continued in the secondary schools according to further programmes to be settled between the State and Holy See. The Church's approval would be necessary for the teachers giving religious instruction. Finally (not without pre-occupation on both sides), the State recognised that the organisations of the *Catholic Action*, operating outside political parties and under the immediate authorities of the Church, might diffuse and encourage Catholic principles. It is interesting to observe that this Article, 43, ended in its draft form with the words, " in individual, family and social life." These words were finally deleted.

Finance. The financial gain for the Church was considerable. The losses it had suffered in the nineteenth century were recompensed by a total gift of two milliard lire.[1] Contributions for the support of the Church or ecclesiastics would henceforth be immune from taxation. The salaries of the clergy would not be taxed.

That hysteria which accompanies everything that happens in Fascist Italy rose to frenzy on this occasion. For both sides claimed a total and glorious victory ; both forgot that, after all, Church and State had managed to get on with each other in the past, despite their formal differences ; both sides were perhaps a little afraid of implications of what they had surrendered to the other. The moral honeymoon was soon over—at least the husband, Mussolini, began exerting Victorian rights. Within three months, he said he sequestrated more Catholic journals than in the seven years before ! The Catholics were claiming far too much ! His long, long speech of May 14th, 1929, in Parliament, in which he seems to me less happy than in any other of his speeches, dashed icy water in the face of the Pope. " We have not resuscitated the temporal power of the Pope : we have buried it." If the Church had any pre-eminence, it was granted by the State ; other religions were freely admitted also. They also had the rights of religious marriage. In the secondary schools it would not be the simple catechism that was taught, but history

[1] Some in depreciated stock.

and morals also. And parents had the right to withdraw their children from religious instruction. Rome had developed Christianity from a probably vanishing sect into a universal religion. Let the ardours lie down ! The State would not abdicate in regard to the education of youth.

" Everyone knows that the Fascist régime when it enters into battle, conducts it to the end and leaves a desert behind it. Nor should anyone deny the moral character of the Fascist State, because I would be ashamed to speak from this tribune, if I did not feel that I was representing the moral and spiritual force of the State. What would the State be, if it did not possess a spirit of its own, a morality of its own, which is what gives force to its laws, and by which it succeeds in making itself obeyed by its citizens ? What would the State be ? A miserable thing, before which the citizens would have the right of revolt or contempt. The Fascist State claims in full its character of ethicality ; it is Catholic, but it is Fascist, even above all exclusively essentially Fascist."

The Pope now knew that what he had supposed to be spiritual concessions were only verbal offerings. When, a few days later, students from the College of Mondragona visited him, he said :

" It is certainly not we who will say that it is necessary, proper and opportune, for the State in its work of education, to breed conquerors, and raise children for conquest. What is done by one State might well be done by the whole world. And if all the States brought up their children for conquest, what would happen ? Rather than collaborating for universal pacification one would be working for a general conflagration . . . unless it is intended—and is this not what *one* is really trying to say—that it is intended to bring up youth for the conquest of truth and virtue, in which case, we heartily agree. . . . But on one point we shall never agree, the tendency to restrict, to diminish, to deny the right of education which nature and God have conferred on the family and the Church."

Mussolini replied to this without compromise,

" to dispel an atmosphere which by being too nebulous and sentimental would end by altering the contours of things, the character and significance of events."

And then on May 25th, 1929, by a speech in the Senate, he once more pushed the Pope back into his pocket.

" To say that instruction belongs to the family is to say something outside contemporary reality. The modern family, assailed by needs of an economic order, confronted every day by the struggle of life, cannot instruct anybody.[1] Only the State, with its means of all kinds, can absolve this task. I add that the State can also impart the necessary religious instruction, *integrating it with the complex of other disciplines* [*sic!*]. What then is the education which we claim in an absolute manner ? The education of the citizen . . . if the world were not the world of ferocious wolves that we know, such even who happen to wear top-hats and funeral frock-coats, we would then renounce our education, to which finally we give a name, since hypocrisy is hateful to us : a warlike education."

Mussolini's distinction between instruction and education was good politics, but bad psychology. To him instruction was a technical, merely instrumental, matter. It was concerned with facts, and words, and formulæ.

Of this the State claimed no monopoly ; it had permitted the establishment of the Catholic University of Milan ! But education ! The moulding of character ? This is the State's business ! Religion was only instruction, and therefore subject to the final control, integration, and moulding of the State.

Fascist Offensive. The Pope and his Fathers would not yield, and reiterated claims as absolute as the Fascists for the education of man. Then the Fascist Government took the offensive drastically. The Catholic Action, an international association for Catholics' education and social work, had 250 Diocesan Committees, 4,000 sections of men, and 5,000 Catholic Youth clubs in Italy. Until October 1929, it was allowed the immunity from State control presumably implied in Article 218 of the Law on Public Security : " By associations are meant parties, groups and political associations in general." Inclusion in this article began to be threatened by the Government Press. The *Osservatore Romano* invoked the Article in defence of the Catholic Youth organisations. The Government brusquely intervened by abrogating it. The definition of " associations " now

[1] It is remarkable how Mussolini, the chief fulminator against the alleged materialism of the Socialists, subordinates the chief spiritual values to economic satisfactions. " A poor country cannot afford liberty." The family can't teach because it is occupied with the economic struggle !

rested with the Government. The Catholic associations were therefore subjected to the rule requiring that the political authorities must be informed of their constitution, rules, register of members, objects, and so on.

There was comparative quiet during 1930. Both sides took stock of the situation, and the Catholic Action energetically proceeded with recruitment. In spring 1931, the *Lavoro Fascista*, the "labour" organ of the régime, began an impassioned campaign against the Catholic Action for interference in the charitable assistance services of the trade unions. Satisfaction having been granted on this score, a battle then began on the subject of education. *Gioventù Fascista* published an article (April 12th, 1931) on *Hatred of One's Enemies*, dilating on the violences of the Pope and the doctrines of Holy Writ. The storm raged. The Secretary of the Party reminded the Pope, what he should have known long ago, that the Concordat was made with the *totalitarian* régime and the *Corporate* State.

The Church Caught in the "Totalitarian" State. Thereupon the Pope, in a letter to Cardinal Schuster of Milan, asked whether he had fallen into a trap—"totalitarian" and "Corporate"? He could not believe that the State intended to extend its reach to supernatural life. That was for the Church and Catholic Action; and the latter, also, could properly occupy itself, in a Christian and Catholic manner, with the "common good," the Polis.

"Fascism says and pretends that it is Catholic. Well! In order to be Catholic, not only in name, but, in fact, to be true and good Catholics, and not falsely named Catholics, not of those who, by their manner of speech and action, afflict the heart of the Mother and the Father, sadden their brothers and mislead them by bad examples—for all this there is but one way, one only, but indispensable and irreplaceable: to obey the Church and its Head!"

The Party Attacks. The Press campaign became virulent. The University Fascist Groups began to annoy the Catholic Students' Groups. Persecutions were noticed daily in *Osservatore Romano*. "Down with the Pope!" and "Kill him!" were shouted. The *Lavoro Fascista* charged the Catholic Action with a

conspiracy to overthrow the Fascist régime. All the Press took up the chorus. The Young Fascists undertook expeditions and sacked many Catholic centres. The Government had meanwhile dissolved all the Young Catholic organisations !

The answer was the Pope's Encyclical, " *Non Abbiamo Bisogno* —Concerning *Catholic Action*." The Pope's protests here, and his views on the place of the State and the Church in education, illuminate the character of Fascist thought and action extremely well. The Pope complained that the manner of the disbanding was such as " to give the impression that action was being taken against a vast and dangerous organisation of criminals, although the young men and young women involved are certainly some of the best among the good." Orders were carried out with brutality, violence, and bloodshed ! Uniformed members of a political party were present. Supreme authority must have issued instructions. " It is easy to admit, and it was equally easy to have foreseen, that the limits of these directions could and would have, almost necessarily, been exceeded." Of course.

" But there have been other attacks on truth and justice on a larger scale. The inventions, falsehoods, and real calumnies diffused by the hostile Press of the Party, which is the only Press which is free to say and to dare to say anything, and is often ordered or almost ordered what it must say, were largely summarised in a message which was cautiously characterised as unofficial and yet was broadcast to the general public by the most powerful means of diffusion which exist at present.

" The history of the documents prepared not in the service of truth, but in contempt of truth and of justice, is a long and sad story. But we must affirm, with deep dismay, that in Our many years of active life as a librarian We have rarely seen an article so tendentious and so contrary to truth and justice in its reference to this Holy See, to Italian Catholic Action, and particularly to the associations which have been so harshly treated."

The Pope had the temerity to call the Government's message " facile " . . . in order not to be obliged to say " impudent." Thousands of visitors had observed the irreverences, the violence, the vandalism ! The Church was accused of ingratitude to the Party which had guaranteed religious liberty. Indeed this *liberty* was being given in the queerest way !

" These attacks had their culmination in the police measures taken against the organisations, and in the manner to which We have already alluded. They were attacks and measures such as to lead one seriously to doubt whether the former benevolences and favours were indeed actuated by a sincere love and zeal for religion, or whether they were not rather due to pure calculation and to an ultimate goal of domination. And if the question of ingratitude is to be considered, it should be rather the ingratitude now shown towards the Holy See by a Party and by a régime which, in the opinion of the whole world, from the fact of establishing friendly relations with the Holy See, both gained a prestige and a credit in the country and outside it, which some people, both in and out of Italy, considered excessive, inasmuch as they deemed the favours on Our part too great, and the trust and confidence which We reposed too full."

Catholic Action was not, as its accusers alleged, a political party.

" Banners, badges, identification cards and other similar external appurtenances are to-day the most common things in every country of the world for the most varied kind of associations and activities which have nothing, and wish to have nothing, in common with politics, such as sports and professional organisations, civil and military clubs, commercial and industrial groups, and even school children, such as those organised exclusively in a religious way like the little ones who belong to the Crusaders of the Blessed Sacrament."

The accusation that the leaders of the Action were almost to a man members, or leaders of, the disbanded Popular Party was demonstrably exaggerated. Those who had entered the Action since the disbandment of the Party submitted to the rule of abstention from all political activity. Fascists claimed, finally, that they acted in " defence of the State, which is no more than the simple duty of every Government." Against whom did they defend this State? Five hundred thousand young girls and women; 220,000 " effective " members; 100,000 " little aspirants " and 150,000 still smaller children called " Benjamins." Besides this there was the Young Men's Association. " If," asked the Pope, " it were not for the harmlessness and peaceableness for which they have been sneered at, would their persecutors (sometimes armed) have dared to fall on them? "

The Pope tore away all the assertions and pretexts, the

allegations of manifest or disguised hostility to the régime and Party, of being a refuge for adversaries. The intention was nothing less than to tear away *all* the young.

Statolatry. Then the Encyclical confronts the Catholic and the Fascist claim on youth.

" There has been no attention paid to your protests and assurances, Venerable Brethren, concerning the true nature of Catholic Action and its work, and concerning the sacred and inviolable rights of souls and of the Church. . . . We repeat : ' The sacred and inviolable rights of souls and of the Church ' ; because this matter concerns the right of souls to procure for themselves the greatest spiritual good according to the teaching and under the formative work of the Church, the divinely appointed and sole mandatory of this teaching and of this work in that supernatural order which is established in the blood of the Redeemer and is necessary and obligatory for all of us if we are to share in the Divine Redemption."

The Church was confronted by the attempt to monopolise the young for " statolatry ":

" . . . to monopolise completely the young, from their tenderest years up to manhood and womanhood, for the exclusive advantage of a party and of a régime based on an ideology which clearly resolves itself into a true, a real pagan worship of the State—the ' Statolatry ' which is no less in contrast with the natural rights of the family than it is in contradiction with the supernatural rights of the Church.

" The Church of Jesus Christ has never contested the rights and the duties of the State concerning the education of its citizens. . . . Such rights and duties are unchallengeable as long as they remain within the limits of the State's proper competency, a competence which in its turn is clearly indicated and determined by the rôle of the State, a rôle which, though certainly not only bodily and material, is by its very nature limited to the natural, the terrestrial, and the temporal. . . .

" A conception of the State which makes the rising generations belong to it entirely, without any exception, from the tenderest years up to adult life, cannot be reconciled by a Catholic either with Catholic doctrine or with the natural rights of the family. It is not possible for a Catholic to accept the claim that the Church and the Pope must limit themselves to the external practices of religion

(such as Mass and the Sacraments), and that all the rest of education belongs to the State."

The Fascist Oath. As though this were not enough, the Pope advanced into the camp of those who had sorely tried him —and in their most sensitive spot, the Fascist Oath. He particularly emphasised the phrase " to execute orders without discussion." " Such an oath as it stands is unlawful." He knew the torments and doubt which the oath and recent occurrences had cost so many Catholics. What then was to be done ?

" Realising the many difficulties of the present hour, and knowing that membership in the party and the oath are for countless persons a necessary condition of their career, of their daily bread, and even of their life itself, We have sought to find a way which would restore tranquillity to these consciences, reducing to a minimum the external difficulties of the situation. It seems to Us that such a means for those who have already received the membership-card would be to make for themselves before God, in their own consciences, a reservation such as ' Saving the laws of God and of the Church,' or ' In accordance with the duties of a good Christian,' with the firm proposal to declare also externally such a reservation if the need of it arose.

" We would desire that Our prayer may move those chiefs of the party who decide its policy and give the orders. It is the prayer of a Father who is jealous for the consciences of so many of his children. Let the reservation just mentioned be included in the oath-formula. *Better still, let the oath be dropped, seeing that an oath is an act of religion, and that it is out of place on the membership-cards of a political party.*"[1]

This was a bite for the Party and the Leader as pleasant to swallow as iron filings. The Pope's arrows were barbed, they hurt ; and the moral victory easily lay with him. The attack on the oath was most smarting of all. For henceforth, what Federal Secretary of the Party could be sure about the " total " adhesion of any Catholic to the régime ? This may explain why the phrase " without discussion " was dropped from the oath in the form appearing in 1932, and why " God " was included.

On July 9th, the Party sent out the circular, that, " according to orders given by the Chief of the Government and Duce of

[1] The Pope's political science was evidently out of date !

Fascism, the compatibility between membership of the Fascist Party and that of membership of associations dependent on Catholic Action is revoked." Thousands of Catholics resigned from the Party, and the Party expelled thousands. There were furious doings. On July 14th, 1931, the Directory of the Party made what Gentile called "a proud, dignified, disdainful answer"; but to me it sounds weak.

"The Directory protests firmly against the recent encyclical according to which the oath of the Black Shirts is taken for bread, career, or a living. . . . It therefore repudiates the grave offence by which it is sought to humiliate their faith already proved by sacrifice."

The Result: Suaviter in Modo. The State could now see that the Church had a power over souls, and that if *it* wanted them it must entice them away over a long term of years, with all the diverse means, even the appearance of accepting humiliation, necessary to such enticement. As with the Trade Unions, gradual but unrelenting encroachment was the right strategy. It was realised that even haste would not be victorious except after long years. Nor could the Pope forgo the advantages of the Concordat, or continue an enmity to the death; for, at the very least, the Church had secured legally guaranteed admission into the schools, and immunity for its own seminaries from State control of any kind. A reconciliation was effected on September 2nd, 1931. Catholic Action was trimmed of "every manifestation proper to political parties and traditional to them." Its directors would not belong to parties hostile to the régime. Its ends were purely religious and supernatural. It surrendered all pretensions to its own economic associations, thus leaving the State the monopoly over employers' and employees' syndicates. The Youth organisations were re-established, but their cards and banners were to correspond strictly to their religious ends. They were to have no other flags but the national flag and their religious banners. "The local associations shall abstain from carrying on any sort of athletic or sports activity and shall limit themselves to exercises of a recreative and educative nature, with religious ends."

Gains for the Dictatorship. Thus, Mussolini has, for his time, won the victory. He has " the spiritual assistance " the régime needs. He has reduced to the minimum the doubts which Catholics may have in asking for the Fascist *tessera* for themselves and their children. For the lustre and magnificence which Rome gave to Christianity, he takes something back for the benefit of Fascism. On February 11th, 1932, he visited the Pope ; went in magnificent procession to the tomb of St. Peter ; was sprinkled with holy water and made the sign of the Cross ; and, detaching himself from his Ministers and journalists, went to the Altar and prayed. He had obtained all the " spiritual assistance " the Church could give. About one-third of the Elementary Text-books are given to religious texts—prayers, the catechism, scripture. Two-thirds laud the State. Their juxtaposition is blasphemy.

Yet the Pope cannot be silenced. The State speaks of war and he speaks of peace, and rebukes those who speak of war. The State speaks in the philosophy, and often with the words, of Gentile ; the Pope puts all of Gentile's works, including his panegyric of Mussolini and the Fascist State, on the *Index*. In the Fascist philosophy, the State is Mussolini, and Mussolini is mortal. After ten years of dictatorship he confessed that he needed another thirty to bend souls as he would have them. The Church is all, everywhere, and immortal. It alone can wait, and so can win. Meanwhile, the Fascist State is in almost complete control of youth, as we have demonstrated.

II

The Schools and Universities

It is not necessary to argue at length the proposition that education is served more by the men and women who teach, and the doctrine they teach, than by mere organisations and methods. The Fascists particularly emphasise the human agent and the doctrine, and especially so in the reforms instituted by Gentile, Mussolini's Minister of Education. Adapting plans prepared by Croce he reformed the elementary and secondary schools and the Universities, their number, their status, their curriculum (not of

the Universities), the relationship between the Ministry and the local authorities, and many other things, but this was all instrumental to his chief end, to bring the schools in closer relation to life, to vivify teaching on the theory that only a vivid intense personality can help the child to evolve his own native dispositions in a vital, creative relationship with the world he looks out upon. Part of this world, of course, should be a Fascist outlook, as he understood a Fascist outlook. Consciously then, he was a servant of Fascism ; unconsciously, he was the servant of his own nature, which had produced his neo-idealist philosophy. Since to him pedagogy was simply obedience to a philosophy of mind, and since no one better than he can see the crudities of Fascism, which is so much dependent upon the narrow-minded Nationalists for its doctrine and action, his views of the requirements of the country were necessarily much broader-minded and sounder than those of the Fascist entourage. Between him and the bravos was all the great gulf which separates a humane philosopher from the beetle-browed bigots of the Inquisition.

Perversion of Gentile's Reforms. After years of hard work, and much unpopularity with the teachers who were displeased with his reforms and opposition from the students and the parents of students who did not relish educational severity and from the uncultured Fascists who did not like philosophers, especially those indelibly streaked with liberalism, Gentile resigned. He explained that he did not disagree with Mussolini either on Fascism or on education. But, in a famous speech in the Senate in 1930, he made an apologia for his reforms, defending them against the degeneration they had suffered at the hands of Ministers who succeeded him, an apologia by no means pleasing to Mussolini, who observed too many Senators applaud it ! The following quotation is a priceless commentary on the régime :

" Senators ! In the schools you cannot find anything different from life outside the schools. A new natural life, a new public conscience may generate a new school. But if the former stops, the latter will stop and stagnate also. The schools will give back magnified and multiplied, the energies you put in it. But it is necessary that these energies shall meanwhile exist in the country. Therefore the

problem of making the schools Fascist is the problem itself of making the nation Fascist. . . . The important thing is not to confuse faith with formulæ, the life of the mind with a membership-card. The great mass of Italians to-day, if we only take account of simple adhesion to the régime, is Fascist. . . . But the régime is a sign, a programme, a principle. One is not Fascist, when one merely limits oneself to belonging formally to the régime and to move in its orbit. It is too evident that the Fascist out of fear—since there are also some of this species—is not Fascist except with his lips, or at the most with his backbone; since Fascism is rather courage, even daring. Discipline, yes : iron, military discipline ; *but of soldiers, that is of men who have a conscience, a will, a character, and who therefore do not renounce themselves in a devotion in which—nothing is given !* It is necessary that the Fascist should think, and will, educate himself, and form himself, and collaborate for his part in the construction of the new potent Fatherland, which cannot be but a phrase, even when spoken in a loud voice, but must be a reality : which can be born only of the sacrifice of men which give themselves to an ideal."

Fascism in the schools then was yet to seek, because it was not yet in universal existence. All the character of Fascist educational policy, however, lies in the interstices of Gentile's remarks. There is his own attempt at free teaching, which would be infused with the colour of the Fascist mind *if there was* a Fascist mind, and also the throwing over of Gentile himself because his standard was too high for Fascists. And there is the contrary, the determination of the Fascist Government to exclude Gentile and Gentilism from the schools, to exclude everything save the nationalism and the social doctrine of the Duce, and the worship of the Duce, the Party, and all that therein is. Not the open, free-will idealism of Gentile has triumphed—he was squeezed dry and the peel thrown away[1]—but the closed mind of the Fascist doctrine.

Fascist Enthusiasm for Education. Yet it is arguable that narrow-minded education is better than none, and that the opening of the ways to, and the improvement of, the organisation of the schools is praiseworthy. And it is undeniable that in the last twelve years a great service has been rendered by the

[1] Made editor of the *Enciclopedia Italiana*, and President of the Institute of Fascist Culture.

Fascist Government to Italian education, regarded from the angle of organisation, method and opportunity. But not from that of the teachers and the purpose of the teaching. Attendance at school, which formerly had been compulsory to the age of twelve, was raised to fourteen, and the enforcement of attendance was made more efficient. New schools have been built and old ones improved. In 1932, the elementary schools and all the teachers were brought under the direct dependence of the central authority. All this is an exceedingly important step forward, and the Government has increased the expenditure on all forms of education (including libraries) by 50 per cent over that of 1922–23, and this in a currency worth much more ![1] It may be, of course, that the motive was not the pure one, that of education in the sense of the complete and free development of the individual, but to provide the régime with complete control over the organs of opinion and the sources of opposition. Yet narrow motives may also have beneficial, if unexpected, consequences. They have, at any rate, lent energy and provided the money necessary for educational extension ! The Superior Council of Public Instruction, the supreme advisory body, which, under the pressure of the school teachers' organisations, had before Fascism become largely representative, was made entirely appointive. Since Gentile's day, however, this great Council has been divided up into sections, and thereby has lost its character of generality. The country was divided into fewer administrative regions than before—for superintendence and disciplinary matters. The number of Universities, of which Italy has far too many, was reduced. The teachers were mustered, finally almost to a man (and woman), into Fascist associations directly dependent upon the Fascist Party. In 1932, the Ministry of Public Instruction had its name changed to Ministry of National Education—of significance because it implied the dominance of the central authority and the predominance of " culture " over fact.

What now of the spirit of the teaching ? Gentile designed it to reduce the domination of the text-book, of learning by rote, and to bring the tang of actual life, and the problems of conduct,

[1] The total expenditure in 1931–32 was about £25 million, at the rate of 60 lire to the £.

into the schools. This is the crucial issue in education all over the contemporary world. It implied two things, the distribution of the whole field among different schools, each serving a particular group according to their bent and requirements, and the establishment of the appropriate curriculum in each. After attending elementary schools until eleven, pupils enter the secondary schools for three years until they are fourteen. These pupils have a choice between general education at a higher standard, or trade or high schools. Those who are to continue their secondary education enter the high schools to the age of sixteen, and then enter the *licei*, for classical or scientific preparation for three years.[1] Then there is the University stage. After the elementary stage those who intend to take up a vocational course go to technical schools. Intending teachers have a seven years' course at the Normal Schools. *Private schools were given encouragement*, but subjected to State regulation and inspection. Of great importance was the establishment of a State examination, equal for all, private and public schools, at the end of the secondary course and preparatory for the Universities. The intention was to improve the curriculum and the style of teaching, and to make the standard uniform and severe.

The Elementary Schools. The elementary curriculum places greatest importance in the early years on reading, writing and arithmetic. In the later years there is an increase of science, history, geography, drawing, recitation. Of particular interest are the two hours per week on religion, and those on "recreative intellectual occupations," decreasing from six in the first year to one in the last. Gentile re-introduced the teaching of the Catholic religion into the schools. It was much criticised by anti-clerical Fascists, and, of course, by anti-Fascists. On this subject Gentile, who had argued this in 1907, may speak for himself.[2]

"Religion has a formative importance, of the first order in the mind of children. The value which a religious conception of life has for a people like the Italian and for the formation of the human spirit cannot be supplied by any other discipline. Naturally, to the child we must teach the religion of the land in which it is born, of

[1] Only a little above one-third of the places are free in Italian secondary schools; in England one-half are free.

[2] p. 32 : December 26th, 1922.

the environment in which it lives, even in that in which it has a positive content; such as results from the historic process through which it has come down to us. Therefore, to the Italian child must be taught the Catholic religion, in the same way as we teach the language of Italian writers. Then, afterwards, ascending in the scale of years and the maturity and personality of his mind growing, it can by itself pass beyond the first conception of religion which was taught in school and overcome it with the work of its thought. . . . Further, I do not hesitate to recognise that, among the various religions, Catholicism is that which better than any other prepares the mind for a sound religious conception of life, because with the universality of its content, it gives to those it follows, the idea of limits, in the same way that a writer even when he has arrived at possessing an individual style, that is his own language, always finds in the vocabulary the limit necessary to the discipline and the clarity of his own expression, whereas Protestantism, for example, leaving to the individual the most complete liberty of conscience and allowing everybody to set up his own credo, offers much less power of fusion, of reduction to the unity of the thinking mind, than Catholicism offers . . . the child will have learnt from his first years not to be indifferent in face of one of the essential activities of the spirit."

In the secondary schools, of course, there are philosophic and historical studies alongside the religious. It was Gentile's expectation that these, in the maturer years, would put religion in its right place, the place it would come to occupy when tested and jostled by these secular studies.

Now let us turn to the political character of the teaching. Does it tend to reason or obscurantism; to peace or war; to kindness or cruelty; to virile individuality or to blind obedience? On the whole, it must be confessed, to the latter of each pair of alternatives.

The Schools Branches of the Fascist Party. The object is accomplished through the patriotic "State" exercises of the school, the teaching in history and reading lessons and recreational hours, and through the text-books. Frankly, every school has been converted into a sub-branch of the Fascist Party. The picture of the Duce and the King, and the Crucifix, decorate every room. Every school has a flag, run up every day to the singing of the royal anthem and the "Balilla" and other Fascist songs. Each class-room is named after a Fascist martyr.

There are commemorative altars, and marble tablets, and a Flame of Remembrance to Fascist martyrs of the neighbourhood. Teacher comes in his Black Shirt.

The boys mount guard on Fascist anniversaries. The walls are covered with the Duce's allocution to the children, and the various Decalogues. The best children have the honour of relighting the Flame of Remembrance every day. The school lives in a perpetual round of celebrations, songs, parades, and harangues, whipped up by the circulars of the Ministry of Education, kept up to fever pitch by the local Party Secretary, the Ministry's Inspectors, and the organisers of the Association of the Schools. First the Duce, then the régime, then Italy, then the individual Italian, then the rest of the world !

The teachers are helped in the good work by their own review *Diritti della Scuola,* " The Rights of the School," and by the almanac of the Association. The latter is a real God-send to teachers who might not know what Fascism is about. Its five hundred pages contain historical notes for each day (enough to set the imagination working), the " realisations " of the Fascist Government, facts and figures, and phrases ; excerpts from the speeches of the Duce ; biographies of heroes ; and a section, " Heart of a Balilla," in which are collected anecdotes of civil bravery—rescues from drowning, first aid, fleeing horses, requests to wear the Black Shirt on a death-bed, and so on. By these means all the anniversaries, all the deeds, all the hopes, all the plans of the Government, all the doctrines of Mussolini, as I have explained and analysed them, in the appropriate, that is the crudest imaginable, form, are instilled into the minds of the pupils. No alternative appears ; none is conceivably possible. It has been declared dangerous even to mention the State of Italy before 1922, lest the comparisons should wake the mind into asking questions. Lombardo-Radice, the famous educationist, who contributed the curriculum of the elementary schools to the Gentile reforms, had arranged that in place of the essay or " composition," the pupils should keep a diary. The régime has taken full advantage of this vehicle of the children for expressing their own thoughts and selves by dictating to them what thoughts and selves to express, and upon what occasions.

The Text-books. Most characteristic and ensnaring of all are the State-prescribed text-books. The régime began by prohibiting the use of text-books which had not been approved by the State. A commission was appointed to examine and certify all existing text-books. The intention was educational in the genuine sense. With the triumph of absolutism the claims of the Fascist intransigents upon the children waxed, and, after a hot campaign in 1928 between them and those who did not want the text-book to become a " State monopoly like salt and tobacco," the Government decreed that for elementary schools there should be State text-books, and that these and these only should be used. By 1930, they were ready and in use.

Some description of their character is necessary. They are beautifully printed and illustrated in modern style, the use of colour being especially happy. They are not entirely devoted to propaganda for the Fascist system. But even when they are not, the little illustrations show the Fascist children in uniform and marching with rifles and fixed bayonets, or some similarly educational picture. There are the usual elementary lessons in civilisation—love your mother, father, brothers; obey and respect grown-ups; observe the beauties of the land, and so on.

Then one begins to smell the sulphur and brimstone. Why are you a Balilla? Why are you a " Little Italian Girl "? It is not enough to have a membership-card and the uniform! You must be sincere in heart and educated to Fascism! For example, you must learn to obey. What is the first duty of a child? Obedience! The second? Obedience! The third? Obedience. The Fascist celebrations are explained. The flag and the rods are illustrated, with appropriate verses. The life of the Duce is retold under the caption: "*The Child Prodigy.*" Then the story of the War; the children are saddened by Italy's sufferings; made proud by Italy's victory; made angry with Italy's enemies. An entire legend of Mussolini as a war hero is created. The impression is given that the War was fought at his wish and under his direction, and that the life of several millions of soldiers in the trenches gravitated entirely around him, and even under his command. I say that is the impression. It is not stated in so many words. Yet again, he is given the credit of being but a simple soldier. The

story of the Saint's agony is told—his wounds, his sufferings, his brave words to the King : " I would have accepted without complaint an even harsher fate. I am proud of having reddened with my blood, in the fulfilment of my most dangerous duty, the road to Trieste."

The bravery of the King, the magnificence and service of the Royal Family, are properly set out. The story of the reeds, which one by one could be broken, but when altogether, in a bundle, were too strong for destruction, is converted into an advertisement for Fascism. " The symbol of Fascism is a bundle of reeds closely tied together. These reeds represent the will of all the Italians, which is that of being united to the strong and invincible." Then the Pope is put in his place : what the Church gave Fascism is not so much as mentioned, but that the State recognised the City of the Vatican is made perfectly clear ; the spiritual implications are omitted. It is made to sound like a simple transaction in real estate. However the Pope is recognised as a learned and intelligent man and a perfect priest, with the right, therefore, to be head of the Church and pastor of Christian souls. The Church's holy days and legends, of St. George for example, are woven into the vision of the world as thus presented. In the atmosphere of the school the spiritual victory of Jesus Christ becomes a Roman triumph, and his long suffering a lesson in doing as you are told.

Mussolini's poem " To Bread " is reproduced :

> " Love Bread,
> Heart of the home, perfume of the table, joy of the hearth.
> Respect Bread,
> Sweat of the brow, pride of labour, poem of sacrifice.
> Honour Bread,
> Glory of the fields, fragrance of the earth, feast of life.
> Waste not Bread,
> Wealth of the Fatherland, the sweetest gift of God, the holiest reward of human labour."

(Of course, there could be more bread in Italy, at one-third the present price, if the very heavy import duty were taken off. The democratic régime erred on the side of giving a subsidy in order to make bread cheaper than its market price.)

The good work of the régime is extolled ; the swamp-draining

and the rest, of which Fascism has just cause to be proud. The holiday camps for children are made the subject at once of praise for the régime and of a lesson in social justice. "You, thanks be to God, are not poor and can go with your own means. Also when you are asked, you must sacrifice with joy your small savings to aid the children who are less fortunate than yourselves."

The account that I have given is from the Book of the Second Class. The rest are of the same character, but in the higher classes, the nationalistic, militaristic, side is more and more stressed, the world is made more and more to revolve around Italy, and all Italy around Mussolini and the Fascist Revolution. Into the service of this end, History, Geography, Literature, all the studies in human evolution and attainment, are pressed. There are, of course, other readings and stories, out of story-books especially written for the purpose. The Fascist Party offer prizes for the winner of regular competitions for children's books—"of a character essentially Fascist."[1]

For the secondary schools of the various types there are no State-written texts, but the lists of books are settled by the Ministry of Education. Only those approved may be used. Croce's *Breviary of Æsthetics*, for example, is banned. The type of thing which is admitted is *Cultura Fascista*, by Valerio Campogrande, and the same author's *Ordinamento Corporativo*, both of which have gone through several editions. The nature of the former can be gauged from these brief extracts.

"But even the co-operation of the family, the schools, and the institution we have named (Balilla, etc.) would give little result if every Italian, and, above all, every youngster, were not animated and sustained by an absolute, unlimited faith in Fascism. As there is a single official religion, of the State, that is the Catholic religion, so to-day there must be only one political faith, Fascism, which is synonymous with the Italian Nation. And as the Catholic must believe blindly in the Catholic Church, so the perfect Fascist must believe absolutely in the principles of Fascism and obey without limit the authorities acting in its name. Religious dogmas are never discussed; because they are verities revealed by God. Fascist principles are not to be discussed, because they issue from the mind of a Genius: Benito Mussolini."

[1] Fanciulli, *Alza Bandiera*, 1933, for an example.

Naturally, then, the author believes blindly all his superiors tell him. Thus the first duty of the Fascist Italian towards the national society is that of silent discipline, with obedience to the political and military authorities, and with respect to the Fascist ranks, without vain discussion and damaging criticism.

As to the second book mentioned, its nature may be gauged from the author's remarks on the Liberal State.

"The Liberal State, disordered economically, politically, and morally, limited itself to the tutelage—and that badly—of public order. It did not in fact possess the capacity, the force and the authority necessary to resolve the conflict in a radical and definite manner. The Liberal State intended to abstain from the struggle although working-class trade unionism was now massed against the power of the Government. This impotence of the Liberal State allowed the triumph of anarchy, favoured by which, the great workers' organisations became the arbiters of the national life and constituted so many States within and against the State."

The book does not so much as suggest that for fifteen years and more one of the leaders of this "anarchy" was the Genius himself; that he shook the power of the Liberal State; that the alternative to a "radical" solution in the Fascist manner was a "radical" solution in the Socialist manner, and that the latter, perhaps, was the just solution, and may be the final solution. Nothing explains to the young how it is that the radical opponent of capitalism became, at any rate in part, its chief defender, nor prepares him for any other contrasts that may yet issue from the mind of the Genius.

However it would be quite unjust to assert that this is all that the young of Italy learn from fourteen to eighteen in the secondary schools. They undergo a severer *intellectual* training than in England, they acquire a considerable range of information, and ample notions of philosophy and logic. But this is the tradition of the Continent, and not the creation of Fascism. As soon, however, as the student enquires, or before he enquires, what all this information and these exercises *mean* in terms of any hopes, destiny, duty and rights, the authorities firmly rivet the plates of their spiritual frame.

Now one can drill for obedience and get it, but to *convince* is a much harder task. Are the Fascist authorities to eject from

the schools all the literature of the world? If they do, then they will harm themselves, for in the long run the efficiency of their future industrialists and warriors and State servants will suffer, to put the effect at its minimum. "We want thinking, not subjugated, generations," said one of the most brilliant of secondary teachers.[1] Even Fascists do not believe that a literature has been produced since 1922 worth so much, even for Fascist purposes, that all the world's treasures may be kept under lock and key. Nor are they so silly as to want this. Mussolini was always a man who begged for more and more libraries. Hence many Fascists, bigots by nature and primitive in breeding, storm and grind their teeth at the slowness of the results in the secondary schools. They would like a change—but how to secure it? And the more they experience the final obstruction of things in themselves, the more irate and bitter is their storming.

The Teachers Trapped. This brings us to the problem of the teachers. Many teachers whose political views were overtly contrary to those of the Government, and many others suspected of enmity or lukewarmness, mainly secondary-school teachers, were dismissed by force of the decrees[2] relating to State servants whose views were incompatible with those held by the Government. The danger of dismissal had caused the rest to conform, or to appear to conform. The work of proselytisation has been ardently carried on through the Fascist Party and the associations of teachers under its immediate ægis. Their lives are subject to constant supervision and pressure, not so much from the Government, which, however, would not hesitate to do what was necessary, but from the attention of their zealous colleagues. Consideration of power, academic promotion, and prestige at public ceremonies, as much as sincere adoption of Fascism after honest enquiry into political and religious problems, stimulate the activities of the converts. That the heart of the matter, spiritual loyalty to, or even intellectual acceptance of, Fascism, is insufficiently present is clear from scores of

[1] Luigi Volpicelli, of the Scientific Liceo "Cavour," in Rome. Page 21, *Contributo ad una Didattica Fascista*, 1934, cited further below.

[2] January 25th, 1923; Law, December 24th, 1925, and Circular, July 22nd, 1926. Decree, January 13th, 1927.

signs : complaints of the slowness of progress, complaints that, perhaps, Fascism is not precise enough, complaints that too many teachers of the old régime abound in the schools. "Certainly," says the Provincial Trustee of the Association of Secondary Teachers of Rome, "there *is still a zone which is* rather grey"!

The fundamental truth is that the profession of teacher, the ideals of a teacher, the training of teachers, are naturally incompatible with the very essentials of Fascism. In the very passage from which we have just quoted, this most Fascist teacher defends the right of free discussion, discreetly, of course, but hardly Fascist-wise. It does him honour as a teacher. He says :

"For there is a limit in the life of the school beyond which the laws and the codes no longer count : it is the limit where begins, in truth, our mission, where our word is all ; and on this depends the most vital spiritual nourishment of the pupils.

"It is our liberty of thought and action. And this little book proves in truth that even in the Fascist régime this liberty exists ; liberty, all the same, to discuss the problems which touch more than closely, our soul, illuminated and conscious liberty. Who, indeed, would defend and invoke any other form of liberty ? Such healthily democratic methods do not split our Fascist faith : they reinforce it, rather." [1]

No wonder that there are complaints of too many human relics of the old régime. No wonder also that Mussolini and the Secretary of the Party have been the more energetic in massing the young boys and girls in the Balilla organisation. They are not to escape ! If they can be netted *in* the school, good ! If they cannot, then they will be caught outside !

Regular Intimidation. So the bullying goes on. *Libro e Moschetto* feels it necessary to support Mussolini. It seizes on the fact that a Ministerial circular requires that elementary-school teachers shall wear the Black Shirt when in the Party uniform, or as officials of the Balilla. It comments :

"The unity which to-day guides all of Fascist life, in all the fields

[1] Preface to *Contributo alla Formazione di una Didattica Fascista*, 1934. This is the report of a congress of teachers on the application of Fascism to education.

of national activity, does not permit of comments on a decision which is the natural alteration of a programme fixed and accepted with passion. Very well! Yet in some schools a few teachers have been observed—with some years of teaching to their credit—who cannot put on the Black Shirt because they are not members of the Party and therefore they wear, before the scholars, the dress of the most incomprehensible and intolerable absenteeism from the life of the Party. What effect will such disregard have upon the Balilla, whom they are supposed to be teaching? And what will be the judgement of the children of Mussolini upon them? If the school is life and Italian life is enthusiasm of faith and Fascist discipline, these teachers are outside life, and therefore useless to the school. Well! What shall we do with them?"

The Universities. Let us pass from this circle of Paradise to the next, the Universities. Gentile wanted freedom of thought and freedom of teaching; he therefore established the amplest freedom for the curriculum of the teachers by the profession itself, the autonomy of internal administration, and gave more liberal grants to the more important Universities. The State examinations were designed to raise the standard of attainment. But later the Universities were pressed into the service of the régime. The Rectors, appointed by the State, add political functions to their administrative duties.

The professors are, of course, State servants. They are appointed by the Ministry of Education after having won an open competition before a commission of five selected by the Minister from people nominated by the Faculties and by the Superior Council of Education. The law guarantees them the liberty of teaching.[1] Yet no one can become a *libere docente*—that is, take the first step in the professorial career—unless he is a member of the Fascist Party. These, and the professors, may be dismissed "if for actions in or outside their duties, they do not give full guarantee of a faithful fulfilment of their duties, or put themselves in situations of incompatibility with the general political principles of the Government. Dismissal is decided by the Cabinet."

[1] Art. 85, *Testo Unico delle Leggi sull' Instruzione Superiore*, Decree, August 31st, 1933.

The Oath. In 1932 a Professional Oath was established:

"I swear to be loyal to the King, to his royal successors and the Fascist régime, to observe loyally the Statuto and the other laws of the State, to exercise the office of teacher and fulfil all the academic duties with the purpose of forming citizens, industrious, honest and devoted to the Fatherland and the Fascist régime. I swear that I do not belong and will not belong to associations or parties whose activity is not conciliable with the duties of my office."[1]

That the oath is not merely formal is shown by this admonition of the Minister of Education, Ercole, circulated on November 29th, 1933.

"They have sworn, and I want to be certain that the oath of loyalty to the régime will find its full response in the teaching and scientific activity of each of them. But the indissolubility between thought and the Fascist Revolution must be real and not purely apparent and cannot support exceptions of any kind. Let it then be clear—and I want each one of you to weigh the value of these words—that the question is of the 'substantial,' and not the purely formal response, and no contrast is conceivable between the activity of a teacher in the schools and his behaviour as citizen towards the régime."

Academic Servitude. What, then, becomes of the guarantee of freedom of teaching? It is exercised only in the non-social sciences. Some men, like Salvemini, had already ceased to trouble the Fascist conscience. Others were edged out by Party threats, and the misbehaviour of the University Groups. Some left of their own accord. When the oath was prescribed some resigned rather than take it. Among them were Orlando, a former Prime Minister, and a distinguished constitutional and administrative jurist[2]; de Sanctis, the Roman historian; Levi Civila, the mathematician; Venturi, the art historian; de Viti de Marco, a very great economist; de Ruggiero, historian (author of the *History of European Liberalism*).

What of those who remain? Some, the smallest proportion, believe in Fascism sincerely; one or two are more Fascist than Mussolini. Others have wiped away the difficulty from their

[1] July 3rd, 1930; *Testo*, Art. 88.
[2] And a supporter of Fascism up to the Elections of 1924 and the Aventine.

conscience by saying, " After all, there is no definite Fascist doctrine, and between what Mussolini declares to be eternal verity and what he does, there is a wide enough no man's land for my free circulation. Fascism ? I, I am Fascism ! So, quite sincerely whatever I teach is Fascism, and the letter, at least, of the oath is not violated. If I can't agree with the policy, I will simply be silent. Let valour be for the real Fascists ; not for me ! " Then there are the plain cynics—they keep their jobs ! Finally, there are the men of conscience who stay in their chairs hoping honestly to keep the light of truth burning even in these difficult circumstances. I know how they are tormented inwardly, and watched and bullied by the Party officials, the Prefect, the editors of the local newspaper, and always subject to having their words reported for action. They take refuge in history ; they get as far away as possible from Mussolini and Fascism, and teach the truth about human nature in distant contexts which just save them from attack. At any moment some sneak or over-passionate zealot belonging to a University Group may give them away. They are the heroes of the Fascist system. On April 12th, 1930, Gentile warned the Government against interference, especially through the students organisations, with the teaching and discipline of the Universities. This did no good.

It requires extraordinary ability and wit in lectures and sermons and writings to avoid the attention of one's colleagues and pupils. A very good example has just come to light. Professor Papi of Pavia and the Juridical Institute of Milan, a brilliant mind, has written a book on Economics of 852 pages. The hue and cry is up ! Why ? The rule had been laid down that " Political Economy " was no longer to be taught, but only " General and Corporative Economy." The purpose was to sweep away the remnants of " Individual Liberalism." Now Papi had written his book before this rule was issued, so he changed the title of his book. The stalwarts at once put the book under the microscope. Forsooth, " the Corporate system was constituted only to avoid certain risks like the expropriation of capital, strikes, lock-out, tumultuous supply of goods, errors of investment " ? Only that ! Monstrous ! Then, of 852 pages, only ten are dedicated to " Fascist Corporative Economics." It is doubtful whether even ten can be

truly reckoned to Fascism ! *Libro e Moschetto* brings it down to seven ! The final comment of this journal is this : " The case of Papi must lead us to certain meditations. Is Corporative Economy, in spite of recent provisions which just now make it obligatory, really taught in Italian Universities ? Are there not still too many men dragged along by the Revolution and who are impediments to its rapid headway ? " The heading of this article is " The Horse of Troy." And it begins by saying that, " Fortunately the spirit of the young men is vigilant in the Fascist Universities and reacts promptly in the new climate against defilements and falsifications."

Feeling that such an atmosphere was still not quite enough to secure the thorough permeation of youth by Fascism, the Political and Economic Science Faculties of Rome, Perugia, Florence and Pisa were made strongholds of the most trustworthy Fascists. Students from Perugia get a preference in State and Syndical administration.

The result is a real impoverishment of the Universities ; the intrepid spirits are driven out, the rest of all grades, though some not without sincerity, remain, and the appointments and promotions come from within a restricted group.

My friends asked me whom I was to interview next ? I gave the name of a man who had had an extremely rapid and high promotion. There was a burst of laughter. I snapped out suddenly, " What are you laughing at ? " They froze with anxiety. For they did not know to whom I would pass on the information that they had laughed. But I had only asked out of curiosity. A little fearfully they told me. Then on another occasion I was pressing a zealot, who has done well out of the régime, with questions on the management of the Trade Unions. He tried to fob me off with the stuff that appears in the " literature " of the subject. He grew redder and redder, and his professorial colleague whiter and whiter, for the latter knew the truth, guessed that I knew it, and was afraid that if he so much as went beyond a look of doubt and a faint cynical smile—which was the only comment he could make on red-face—he might have difficulties later. White-face has a distinguished mind ; red-face is a clever politician, stepping upwards through the University.

What can now be the state of mind of Gentile and many

hundreds of honest, public-spirited, teachers who became Fascist because they thought that Fascism would, through the schools, produce a spiritual renovation, for whom this meant creative self-development, who thought in terms of Socrates' phrase that education is "the obstetrician of the consciousness," and not, like that operation done on frogs by first-year medical students, the entire removal of the brain and then stimulation of the reflex actions with touches of acid? But, as we show later, the operation has fallen short, though not from lack of will on the part of Fascists.

. . . . . .

On December 31st, 1934, three laws were passed to complete and co-ordinate the pre-military and post-military instruction. The laws were particularly important in introducing the universal duty of military instruction before the nominal age of conscription. One law begins: "The functions of citizen and soldier are indistinguishable in the Fascist State. Military education is an integral part of national education; it begins as soon as the child is capable of learning, and continues until the citizen is in a condition to take up arms for the defence of the country." The instruction is given in the Youth organisations, and as part of the regular curriculum of the secondary schools and Universities.

III

The Leisure-Time Organisation
(*Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*)

The most notable product of our highly developed economic system is leisure. The growth of leisure (and wealth) gave freedom to artistic impulses, and, in response, very many forms of amusement, recreation, culture, and sport developed. Public authorities, like the municipalities, the Churches, Trade Unions and voluntary associations of people interested in the same activity, promoted or encouraged, organised and financed, the opportunities sought. Private enterprise provided, perhaps, even more in the field of amusement and sport. These developments extended to Italy also, in the forms most consonant with the climate, the traditions, and the religious organisation of the

country. There were marked regional distinctions in festivals and carnivals, songs, dance and costume. The Church played a specially large part through its lay organisation. The Trade Unions and the Co-operative Societies were taking a larger and larger share in extending the working-man's roads to satisfaction and fulfilment in culture, partly as a means of political exploitation. The climate made the *piazza* Italy's natural club-room, with neither entrance fee nor annual subscription. This, and the café and the wine-shop, were centres of conversation, gossip, laughter, and quarrels, but also of politics, wine-bibbing, and *dolce far niente*. Of course, there were the brothels, to which Italians were specially addicted.

Fascism could not leave all this alone. It came both to serve and exploit. The Duce said, " We must go towards the people ! " For is not this a democratic State, democratic, if disciplined and centralised ? The people must be served ; but they must be organised and disciplined and spurred on. From this, benefits would accrue to the régime : they would love it for its gifts, and be attached to it by its discipline. The competition of the Church would be weakened. They would forget their political sneering, and " vociferation." They would stop wasting time in the wine-shops, and come out into the fresh air, become robust and virile. They would be saved for better things from the degrading dissipation of the brothel. They would live more intensely. The Secretary of the Party, Starace, by the constitution of the Leisure-Time Organisation its supreme controller, thus delivers himself :

" To go towards the people, to educate them, to elevate them ; to make them love their soil, their country, their family and their home ; to inculcate in them the desire to know the true face of their Fatherland by traversing its roads and standing with new eyes before its infinite beauties, bringing it to the mountains and the sea, mighty bulwarks, different and secure, of the frontiers of its land ; to make them expert in swimming and climbing, for the eventual necessities of its warlike to-morrow ! To sever, in joyous and innocent sports competitions, their muscles from apathy ; to reconduct them to the glorious and sweet traditions of their people, whether expressed in the various colours of costume, or the harmony of a song, a procession. . . . And so on through music, song, theatre, painting, sculpture, poetry, crafts, and finally, ' to assist them, lovingly in every step of

life, assuring to them and their family that moral and economic welfare, to which the new and complete comprehension of the proper duties gives to the Italian people, renewed by Fascism, really, and for the first time.' "[1]

Hence the Royal Decree of May 25th, 1925, founded the *Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*, with the object of " promoting the healthy and advantageous employment of the free hours, of the intellectual and manual workers, by institutions directed to develop their physical, intellectual and moral capacity ; and to provide for the increase and co-ordination of such institutions, furnishing them and their members all the necessary assistance. . . ."

Membership is voluntary. It has developed quite remarkably, until in 1933 it had nearly 2,000,000 members. Its centres are municipal, firms (like Fiat), and State employees' associations. There are about 10,000 centres of the first, 2,400 of the second, and the third comprises the workers in State factories. The institution is managed from the centre, through local officials appointed by the Government. The Federal Secretary of the Fascist Party is the president of the *Dopolavoro* in the provinces. Funds are provided by the local authorities and other public bodies ; the Ministry of Education ; the Institutes of Credit ; bequests and gifts, members' contributions, and compulsory contributions from the syndicates.

The quantity of its services is thus displayed in the official figures.

MANIFESTATIONS

	Physical Education		*Artistic Education*				
	Sport ; Excursions		*Music, Cinema, Radio*	*Theatricals, etc.*	*Popular Culture and Folk-lore*	*Professional Education*	*Assistance*
1932	156,022	53,370	471,735	15,390	29,970	32,851	187,335
1933	227,361		665,107	14,862	52,853	36,270	159,412

[1] Starace, *L'Opera Nazionale Dopolavoro*, pp. 12 ff.

This includes every kind of sport. Its cultural activities are comprehensive, and not pedantic. They preserve, as far as possible, the many diverse traditional and regional forms, for which Italy is so famous. (The amateur theatrical circles are not allowed to present more than 10 per cent of foreign plays.) Three travelling Theatres and one Opera House, including the finest artists, travel the length and breadth of Italy. There are lectures in general culture, arts and crafts, professional instruction. There is a war on illiteracy. All these activities are sustained at a high level by the enthusiasm of the local directors, and by competitions, exhibitions and prizes. They have made organised holiday colonies and camps for the members and their families; arranged medical advice and treatment gratuitously or at much reduced fees; given advice on legal and administrative difficulties; secured arrangements for purchases at discounts; reduced prices at theatres and cinemas also; and provided insurance against accidents outside work. They distribute relief in kind and medicaments. For the countryside, they have contributed by teaching, and propaganda towards the improvement of agricultural production.

Of the two million members, it is noteworthy that over a third are salaried employees. These have more leisure and inclination and do less tiring work than the manual workers. Only about 400,000 are agricultural workers—of whom there are four million in Italy. The difficulties of organisation in the rural areas, and the attachment of the labourer to the family and his friends of the village, and perhaps backward education, account for this. Considering the means of propaganda, persuasion, and pressure at the command of the Government, it cannot be said that two million workers (men and women) in a working adult population of, let us say, twelve million, is the proper reward for the efforts of recruitment. People seem to prefer to amuse themselves in their own way at their own expense.

Spiritual Value. This is splendid work, grandly conceived and enthusiastically executed, with great benefits to those who take part. There is, no doubt, a place in other countries for co-ordination of the efforts now made locally and voluntarily. Yet what are the values which Fascism has given, and what has

it taken away? It gives the direct benefits of its various leisure-time services: health and pleasure from exercise, æsthetic fulfilment through painting or looking at pictures, the reflection and spiritual elevation of travel, and the rest. All these are undoubted benefits to be prized. If the Fascist Government had not intervened, and practically secured a monopoly, there might have been less of these satisfactions. There would have been less until the growth of wealth and the development of philanthropy had provided the means, and voluntary effort had provided the stimulus. Where there is the wealth, I see other countries abounding in amusement and recreation and holidays. Given the means and the time, the land proliferates with activities spontaneously craved and voluntarily organised. Look at any local newspaper in England and America, France and Germany before Hitler, and every other country.[1] Even if there were less activities in free countries, they would still be in possession of what Italy has lost, the stimulus, the will, and the practice to create things for themselves. What of the moral worth of that historic cry, *Italia fara da se!*—"Italy will achieve without help!"? Would it not be as proud to say, *Gli Italiani faranno da se!*—"Italians will achieve without help!"? Mussolini might reply, "But I must train my people to discipline!" The free man could validly answer that those who voluntarily submit themselves to the effort required by the discipline of their own cultural and athletic enthusiasms will make the most reliable and tenacious followers—and leaders as well.

IV

Population Policy

The essentially imperialist character of Fascism—its "activist" quality—has pressed it to attempt to increase the birth-rate of an already very prolific people among European nations. The Fascist theory is that international force and prestige and significance in world civilisation depend on material size and

[1] In England, a recent investigation has found nearly one million people in leisure-time organisations among those only for which there are centralised statistics, all without Government encouragement or monopoly. Cf. Madeline Rooff, *Report of Survey on Youth and Leisure*, Carnegie Trust, 1935.

power, and therefore the population must be increased. In his first important speech on this subject, Mussolini said :

" I affirm that the fact, not fundamental, but determinant of the political, and, therefore, economic and moral power of nations, is their demographic strength. Let us speak plainly : what are 40 million Italians compared with 90 million Germans and 200 million Slavs ? Let us turn to the West : what are 40 million Italians compared with 40 million Frenchmen plus the 90 million in their colonies, or compared with the 46 million English and more than 450 million of them in the colonies ? Sirs, Italy to count as anything must arrive on the threshold of the second half of this century (1950) with a population not inferior to 60 million inhabitants " (May 26th, 1927).

The task of increasing the population is regarded by the Government as a " battle." It has adopted many devices to increase the birth-rate. The teaching of birth control was made a crime in the Penal Code of 1926. There is an incessant propaganda in favour of an increase of births. To have children is said to be a patriotic duty ; people without children are regarded as " deserters of paternity " ; the newspapers are full of the stories of prolific mothers (one with seventeen children was given special reports as a heroine) ; not to have children is regarded as a lamentable lack of moral courage and belief in the future. Alternately the Press applauds examples of prolificness, and contains gloomy articles on " the suicide of the white races," " the way to die," or (for example after the return of the Saar to Germany) the increase in the population of her neighbours. Some towns are singled out for praise, and others scolded for " the deplorable decrease in birth." " Think," said the *Agenzia di Roma* on February 7th, 1935, " since from 1922 to the present Italy has lost 2,377,000 children by the decrease of the birth-rate from 12·2 to 9·8, it can be calculated that every year Italian industry and commerce have suffered a loss of nearly 2·4 milliards of lire (one thousand lire per person) of purchases."

Statutes and regulations put a special tax on bachelors ; give special tax remissions to large families ; establish preference in employment for workers with children (this is especially enforceable in public employment and enables the Government to compel officials to marry) ; give power to the Podestà to turn back

country-folk from the towns to their homes; establish the Maternity and Child Welfare Institute (*Opera Maternità ed Infanzia*),[1] semi-public and semi-private charitable assistance for large families; provide honeymoon journeys at cheap rates, and special help for the mothers of illegitimate children. All the public health and athletic arrangements, of course, make for a decrease in mortality.

What has been the result? Certainly not what was hoped. Marriages have not shown an increase: in the years 1922–25, the rate was 8·4 per thousand of the population; it was about 6 in 1932 and slightly more in 1933. The rate of births fell from 29·5 per thousand in 1922–25 to 23·6 in 1933, and, with a declining death-rate of 17·3 to 13·4, gave a net increase of population of 12·2 per thousand in 1933 and of 10·2 per thousand in 1934. Infantile mortality has decreased from over 120 per thousand in 1920 to 113. In 1922 the net increase of population was 485,935; in 1929, 370,477; in 1933, 425,149.

[1] In eight years the Institute has assisted six million mothers, spent 800 million lire (equal to about £13,000,000), and established 7,500 centres. Cf. *Jeunesse fasciste*, by Blandine Ollivier; also Monaco-Aprile, *Protezione della Maternità e dell' Infanzia* (1934), and Fabbri, *L'Opera Nazionale per la Protezione della Maternità e dell' Infanzia*, 1933.

Chapter XVII

THE CORPORATIONS AND ECONOMIC POLICY

The Bolshevik bayonets flashed with the light of an Idea. The Fascists had no Idea. In the thirteen years since 1922, Mussolini and his lieutenants have mustered the bayonets, but have found no original Idea in economic development. For they came to correct, not to create. Yet many ideas have been seized upon and acclaimed, not all of them harmonious, and out of these a structure and a direction have evolved : the Corporations, and State tonics for private enterprise. There is considerable mystification about these in the world at large, and not less in Italy itself.

In October 1930, at the opening session of the National Council of Corporations, Mussolini portentously announced, " The Fascist Council is corporative or it is not Fascist ! " Three years went by, during which the Corporations were not set up. In November 1933, when this same Council began to discuss the actual establishment of the Corporations, Mussolini addressed these cogent questions to the Assembly : " What ought the Corporations to do ? How many of them should there be ? How should they be constituted ? " But there had been pæans of self-congratulation, and daily sneers at foreign countries, ever since the publication of the Charter of Labour in April 1927 ! In fact, the law on the Constitution and Function of the Corporations was not passed until February 1934. On November 10th, 1934, the twenty-two Corporations were inaugurated. At this flourish, this " vibrating act of faith," the Duce declared, " It is as yet premature to say what developments the Corporative system may have in Italy and elsewhere from the point of view of the production and distribution of goods. Ours is a point of departure, not of arrival. Yet since Fascist Corporativism represents the 'social' content of the Revolution, it categorically obliges all men of the régime, wherever and however they are organised, to guarantee its development and

fruitful continuance." Who can be certain what this means?

It is indeed much more important to bring home to English people this indeterminate state of affairs, than to describe the paper constitution of the Corporations. There is, in fact, the acutest division of opinion and doctrine about their economic use and political status. English controversialists, who have somehow acquired the idea that Italy has constructed an original miracle-working constitution which "delivers the goods," can immediately dismiss that idea from their heads. Mussolini would repudiate it, if his supporters would not. It only sounds true because the Italian Government has become adept in the highest degree at creating an impression.

The Corporate idea developed haphazardly. It began as the answer to occasional concrete problems arising out of unrest in industry. Only in recent years has it been put forward as a reasoned system to answer a general indictment of capitalistic production. It grew out of Mussolini's repudiation of the "class" organisations of the proletariat, his sense of nationalism and order, and the practical need felt by an absolutism of destroying the autonomy of any natural grouping, including economic groupings, and among these especially the associations of workers, which afford their members the daily opportunity of information, discussion, and resistance. He detested, and he detests, the wealthy, but they had brought him to power; he had, and preserves, a native affection for the workers, but they could take his power away. He saw, and said, what all observers of the economic system, including Socialists, were saying in Europe after the War, that State capitalism as an uncontrollable bureaucracy would damage the national, including the workers', welfare. But he thought that the capitalist system, when improved, had still something to yield, that the workers were not only entitled to a just distribution of the product of industry, but that their personal status, superior to that of mere "hands," must be recognised and embodied in the law and conditions of industry. And since Italy was a poor country, it could not afford labour disputes; and since the State must be supreme over all aspects of life, it must also be absolute master over the economic process. But if Mussolini used the term "Corporation" in his speech at the constituent meeting of the

Fascist movement, it was only with a vague idea of the national control of economic associations, and the right of such associations to political representation, as suggested by Syndicalists and Liberals like Duguit. He was in the Guild Socialist succession; but as the Guild Socialists were democrats, they could not realise their plans![1] As soon as Mussolini inaugurated the absolutism, the Guild Socialist policy was not only possible, but inevitable. For how, otherwise, would the Government have been able to learn the state of mind of the people grouped economically, how obtain indispensable aid in designing and elaborating its plans, and through what other organs could it apply them? Nor had Mussolini ever followed the Syndicalists as far as to deny the original unifying power of the State.

The economic ideas of his Nationalist and Catholic friends pressed, for the time being, in the same direction. The Nationalists had since pre-War days looked towards a highly organised, highly centralised, State, dealing out justice to employers and employed through Guilds in which class differences would be transcended, if not by a spontaneous patriotism, then by a patriotic Government acting for a nationalist State. The germ of the Corporate State, and of Fascism in the larger sense also, is discoverable in the reports of the Nationalist Party Congresses before the War. A report to the Congress of Milan, May 16th–18th, 1914, made by Alfred Rocco and Filippo Carli, commences "Nationalism loudly proclaims its incompatibility with economic individualism and the complete error of all the principles upon which it is based. The fundamental attitude of Nationalist economy must be that of a violent, absolute, irreconcilable opposition to individualist, Liberal and Socialist economy which rests on principles antagonistic to those of the Nationalist movement, on individualism, utilitarianism, materialism, internationalism."[2] Here, too, is the core of the doctrine of Mussolini.

Again, Catholics interested in social reform, and many of the members of the dissolved *Partito Popolare* and Catholic Action, were already familiar with an analogous trend of doctrine. For

[1] One of the principal philosophers of Fascism, Professor Sergio Panunzio, asked me why England has made so little of Mr. G. D. H. Cole's *Guild Socialism*, I answered, Because we wish to remain a democracy. Democracy implies that the final *decisions* must be taken by a Parliament based on one man one vote. It is impossible to have an assembly representing Guilds based on one man one vote.

[2] Cited in Rosenstock-Franck, *L'Economie corporative fasciste* (1934), p. 16.

in the famous Encyclical on labour conditions, *De Rerum Novarum*, of 1891, which gave a mighty impetus to Christian Socialist formations and doctrinal discussion on the Continent, the Pope actually spoke of the organisation of Corporations, which, freely constituted and fully governed internally, would make for economic peace and progress in a Christian sense under the ægis of a Christian State.

Finally, the Constitution of Fiume established in September 1920 by D'Annunzio was " Corporate." It subjected labour and property to considerable State control, and ordered all the workers in a number of Corporations to govern their respective categories and elect representatives to the governing assembly. This never came into force, but it is undoubtedly one of the yeasty ingredients of the Fascist Corporation.

To secure and to hold the State, Mussolini required sufficient numbers of the workers to dispirit and intimidate those who remained adversaries. The Fascists created their own economic associations of employers and employed. (Henceforth we sometimes refer to such associations as syndicates and use the adjective " syndical.") Edmondo Rossoni, formerly the organiser of Italian Workers in the United States of America, and since become President of the Italian Union of Workers,[1] was induced to turn Fascist and organise the workers' syndicates. As this was seen to be a crucial matter, considerable efforts were made. On January 24th, 1922, a National Congress was held at Bologna, and certain principles laid down. Since these were very important they deserve reproduction.

" (1) Labour constitutes the supreme title of legitimate equipment of civic rights in the social organisation.

" (2) Labour is the product of harmonious efforts with the object of creating, perfecting, and increasing the material, moral, and spiritual welfare of man.

" (3) Workers are defined as all those who consecrate their activity to the above-mentioned end ; also syndical organisation must, in its varied distinct groupings, welcome all workers without demagogic ostracism [*Informative phrase* !].

" (4) The Nation, understood as the supreme synthesis of all the

[1] Cf. the political tendency of the Republican Party.

material and spiritual values of the race, is above individuals, categories and classes, who are the instruments of its greatness, and are not legitimate unless they are contained in the framework of the superior national interest.

"(5) Syndical organisations, instrument of defence and conquest of labour against all forms of parasitism, must tend to develop among the organised the sense of the conscious insertion of syndical activity in the tangled skein of social relations by diffusing the notion that, above classes, there is the Fatherland and Society."

A National Confederation of Syndical Corporations was established, comprising National Corporations of Industrial Work, of Agricultural Work, of Commerce, of Middle and Intellectual Classes, and of Seafarers. In June 1922, it was declared that there were already 450,000 members, 60 per cent of whom were agricultural, 15 per cent industrial workers, and the rest mainly salaried workers, railwaymen, seamen and dock workers. Rossoni's eloquence was a great factor in this success, but Fascist violence and extravagant promises were also of considerable assistance. After the March on Rome, some of the leaders of the formerly Socialist Trade Unions went over, with a following, to Fascism. By the end of 1923, the Fascist Syndicates of Workers comprised over 850,000 members; the formerly Socialist General Confederation of Labour now numbered only 212,000, mainly the lower-paid grades of workers. The leaders who could not be persuaded were imprisoned (some 6,000), deported (some 2,000), or exiled (some 10,000), or they were killed, or their lives "made impossible." The sacking of the still existing offices of the independent workers' organisations continued with the old fury. The armed bands still continued their assaults and murders. The decrees and the laws suppressing opposition groups were, of course, particularly applicable to the workers' associations. They and their newspapers were hammered to bits. The General Confederation transferred what part of it remained loyal to the workers in Paris. It is no wonder then that the workers became plastic to the Government's policy, especially after the Penal Code was brutalised. Matters were more difficult with the employers. The agrarians, for their own defence, were fairly ready to follow the Party. But the industrialists and the rest would have as little to do with the Fascist

workers' syndicates as they had had with the Socialists' and Catholics'. Rossoni was anxious to build a great structure uniting employers' and workers' confederations. The leaders of the Confederation of Industrialists were induced to attend the Grand Council of Fascism, and later, at the Palazzo Chigi, were induced by Mussolini to set up a Commission of the Confederation of Industrialist and the Confederation of Fascist Corporations, "to harmonise and direct their policy according to the rules laid down by the Chief of the Government." This was an appreciable advance, but there was no admission of actually "mixed" confederations, for Mussolini intended—since he was not at that time so sure of a superiority over any great popular rival—to check Rossoni's ambitions, and did.

Having thrown off all restraints in the critical months of 1924 and early 1925, the order was given to worry the industrialists. A strike in the metal industry was provoked, led by Turati, later Secretary of the Fascist Party. At that stage, April 25th, 1925, the Grand Council of Fascism announced the righteousness of strikes ordered by Fascists ("exceptional and for definite ends," while the Socialist strikes were stigmatised as "acts of revolutionary gymnastic, for distant and inaccessible ends"), declared that they were only to take place on orders from above, and proceeded to warn employers' organisations that if they did not behave in the spirit of the pact at the Palazzo Chigi, "Fascism would take the measures necessary to put an end to a monopoly tending to place the interests of individuals above those of production and the Nation." About the same time, Rossoni, at the Congress of his Confederation, obtained the passage of the resolution that *legal* recognition would be given only to "organisations inspired by the principles of the Fascist Revolution."

Thus the Corporate State was on the way. On October 2nd, 1925, at the Palazzo Vidoni, it was substantially established at a meeting of representatives of the workers' syndicates and the industrialists. The industrialists recognised the Fascist syndicates as the *sole* representatives of the workers. The workers' syndicates recognised the Confederation of Industrialists as the *sole* representatives of industry. ("What is the Constitution between friends?" asked one American politician of the other,

winking.) All contractual relations between workers and industrialists would be implemented by the mediation of the two Confederations. *Works Councils were abolished.* (What a satisfaction to the employers, who did not like the " busybodies " on their property, and to Mussolini, who wanted the dispersal of centres of resistance !) Their functions were transferred to the local Trade Union. (What a satisfaction to Rossoni !) Then the whole subject was committed to the Eighteen Solons—composed of Nationalists and Syndicalists. At the session of the Grand Council of October 6th, 1925, the Nationalist, Alfredo Rocco, whose views on the State and economic life have already been indicated, introduced the final projects : no strikes, no lock-outs in the public services, no strikes or lock-outs elsewhere until the Magistracy of Labour had declared them justifiable, a Magistracy of Labour, therefore, to judge the disputes arising out of collective contracts. On April 3rd, 1926, the law on the Juridical Discipline of Collective Labour Relations was passed. This elaborated the principles expounded by Rocco. In July were issued the Regulations for the enforcement of the law.

We cannot traverse the stages of development through the Report of the Commission, the drafting of the Charter of Labour by the Grand Council, and the various laws and regulations thence deriving. We must proceed at once to what was the outcome of the evolution—in principle and structure. It was important to emphasise the fact that the evolution came about under force, and the continued threat of force, and intense and continuous propaganda. Among the many questions that divide the Italian oligarchy is this, whether the Corporative system means the Fascist system as a whole, or whether it has only the narrower meaning, the regulation of economic relations between workers and employers and between the various branches of production. Does it include the militarism, the Dictatorship, and all the rest, or only the problem of economic production ? Does it imply a theory of just economic distribution ? These are not mere academic questions. For there are many who would accept the mere planning and conciliatory functions of the Corporations, but not the Dictatorship in their background. There are others who want the Dictatorship, as

many employers do, but not the control of industry embodied in the Corporations. The direct observer cannot escape the conviction that the term "Corporative" has been used, if not invented, to rouse a sense of wonder in the people, to keep them guessing, to provoke enquiry, and to contrive, out of the sheer mystification of an unusual word, at once to hide the compulsion on which the Dictatorship finally depends and to suggest that a miraculous work of universal benevolence is in the course of performance.[1] The fundamental truth, however, is that the Fascist State claims the right to regulate economic as well as other aspects of life, and has aimed at accomplishing the former through the Corporate organisation. *The Dictatorship is the necessary rack and screw of the Corporate system; all the rest is subordinate machinery.*

Social Justice. In this framework, however, the Fascist Government does not commence with principles of social distribution, and then appropriately order the productive activities of society. It may perhaps do this in days to come. Mussolini's origin and early career may well ultimately culminate in dictatorial Socialism. Not a few Ministers and subordinates expressed to me their disgust with the "bourgeoisie," who have put on black shirts but still infest the lobbies of the Departments for their subsidies and tariffs, and are quick to buy foreign securities when the economic situation is anxious. How "generous" are "the people" in comparison! Mussolini's speeches since November 1933 have emphasised "social justice," and naturally the University teachers, the students, and the publicists have loudly given tongue. A collectivist current is running strongly. Many an industrialist who contributed funds to Mussolini in 1921 and 1922 would now happily make further contributions if the old days could return.

At the inauguration of the Corporations in November 1934, Mussolini made what would, in America, be called a "keynote" speech, on social justice.

[1] Cf. Costamagna, *Diritto Pubblico Fascista*, 1934, pp. 33 ff. I accept his judgement that the "Fascist State" is the all-including term, while the "Corporate State" is a tool of propaganda. Costamagna was secretary to the Commission of Eighteen, and has long been a lawyer in the industrial courts.

"Is it necessary to repeat once again that the Corporations are not ends in themselves but instruments for the attainment of determined ends? This is a common datum. What are the ends? At home, an organisation which will gradually but inflexbily diminish the distances between luxury and poverty, and even the entire lack of a livelihood. It is this which I call a higher 'social justice.' In this century we cannot admit the inevitability of material poverty, we can only accept the sad fatality of physiological poverty. The absurdity of famines which are artifically provoked cannot last. We denounce the clamorous insufficiency of the system. The past century proclaimed the equality of men before the laws, and it was a victory of formidable significance; the Fascist century maintains, even consolidates this principle, but adds another to it, not less formidable, the equality of men before labour understood as a duty and as a right, as creative joy which must expand and ennoble existance, not mortify or depress it.[1] Such basic equality does not exclude, but rather demands, the clearest differentiation of ranks from the point of view of functions, merit, and responsibility. . . . To-day, the 10th November of the Year XIII (1934), the great machine begins to move. We must not expect immediate miracles of it. Indeed, we must expect no miracles of it at all, especially if the political, economic, and moral disorder of which so large a portion of the world suffers should continue. Miracles do not inhere in the economic system. To politics, of which the economic system is an element and a force, belong a will, an organisation, a method. We must prepare an experimental phase more or less long, and we shall need, regarding its yield, to count not only on the efficiency of things, but the indispensable rectification of the mentality of men and on their selection by proven value, which through the work of Fascism is happening. If it is recognised that the crisis is *of* the system (and what has befallen and befalls now confirms it), we must go courageously towards the creation of a new system—ours : disciplined, reinforced, harmonised, in view above all of a collective utility for the producers themselves, entrepreneurs, technicians, workers, through the Corporations created by the State, which represents the whole, and that is the other side of the phenomenon, the world of consumers."

And then Mussolini proceeded to say, as we have quoted verbatim, that this was but a point of departure, and that what would ultimately happen no one could tell.

[1] All this, by the way, is not Fascist originality. These ideas were given to the world by Socialists, and in making the world conscious of *social* equality the Socialists and some Liberals made great sacrifices, and showed great courage in the face of persecution—nowhere more than in Italy before and since Mussolini.

Mussolini's Critique of Capitalism. The reader will have observed in the preceding passage the reference to " the crisis *of* the system," the system being capitalism. This relates to Mussolini's doctrine on the decadence of capitalistic production. It is, on the productional side, Mussolini's fully rationalised explanation of the rise and development of the Corporations, and was contributed as the prelude to the discussions regarding their final constitution (November 14th, 1933). Since it is of basic importance, we reproduce sufficient of it to make its argument clear.

" Is this crisis which has gripped us for the last four years *in* the system or *of* the system ? A grave question. . . . To-day I reply : the crisis has penetrated so profoundly into the system that it has become a crisis *of* the system. [*Loud applause.*] It is no longer a wound but a constitutional disease. To-day, we can affirm that the method of capitalistic production is superseded and with it the theory of economic liberalism which illustrated and provided the apology for it. . . . In the history of Capitalism I should distinguish three periods : the dynamic, the static, the declining. The first runs from 1830 to 1870. . . . The factory—typical expression of industrial Capitalism—is installed : this is the epoch of large margins : hence the law of free competition, with full play for the struggle of one against the other. Here we have many who fall ; many who die ; the Red Cross will take care of them later. . . . This dynamic period of Capitalism might be comprised between the appearance of the steam engine and the opening of the Suez Canal. It is a period of forty years, during which time the State is an absentee ; it only observes. The theorists of ' liberalism ' say : ' You, State, have but one duty, that of avoiding your even being noticed at all by the economic sector ; you will govern better, the less you meddle in economic problems.' Thus economy in all its manifestations is merely restrained by the Penal and Commerical Codes. However, matters change after 1870. No longer the struggle for life, free competition, the selection of the strongest. The first symptoms of tiredness and of a deviation of the capitalistic world become apparent. The era of pools, syndicates, partnerships commences. . . . What is the consequence of all this ? The end of free competition. The margins of profit having grown smaller, the capitalistic undertaking finds it better to agree than to fight, to unite and work in common, sharing the markets and profits. . . . Eventually this coalesced, ' trustified ' Capitalism turns to the State. What does it ask ? It seeks customs protection. In this way, Free Trade, which is but a wider aspect of the liberal economic

doctrine, receives its death blow. . . . Even England, abjuring all that seemed traditional in her economic, political, and moral life, yielded to an ever harsher protectionism. . . . Super-capitalism having come to this phase, draws its inspiration and justification from this utopia: unlimited consumption. The capitalistic ideal is that of standardising mankind from its cradle to its coffin. . . . When does capitalistic enterprise cease to be an economic fact? When its size leads it to become a social one. And this is just the moment when capitalistic enterprise, having fallen into difficulties, throws itself desperately into the State's arms. This is the instant when the State's intervention becomes more and more necessary. It is fretfully sought by those who ignored it. We are at this point: were the States in all the Nations of Europe to go to sleep for twenty-four hours, such a parenthesis would produce a disaster. There is now no economic field in which the State is not obliged to intervene. Had we to yield (as an hypothesis) to this last kind of Capitalism, we would arrive directly at State Capitalism which is nothing else but 'State Socialism' turned upside down. In either way, it would mean the bureaucratisation of the National economy. . . . The Corporation is established to develop the wealth, political power and welfare of the Italian people. These three elements are conditioned by one another. Political strength creates wealth, while wealth, in its turn, invigorates political action. I wish to call your attention to what I mentioned as our scope, namely the welfare of the people. It is necessary that at a certain moment these institutions which we have created shall be felt and noticed directly by the masses as instruments through which they improve their standard of life. . . . The labourer, the peasant, should be able at a certain moment to tell himself and his dear ones: 'If I am to-day effectively better off, I owe it to the institutions which the Fascist Revolution has created.' . . . To-day we are burying economic liberalism, the Corporation plays that part in the economic field, which the Grand Council and the Militia do in the political. Corporativism means a disciplined, and therefore a controlled, economy, since there can be no discipline which is not controlled. Corporativism overcomes Socialism as well as it does Liberalism: it creates a new synthesis."

The Socialist State has not yet arrived in Italy. The emphasis in practice is still upon the "superior interests of production." The whole spirit of the Charter of Labour is superficially regulated capitalism, with private property as its fundamental basis. This document, vaunted in Italy as equal in world importance to the Declaration of the Rights of Man, requires examination.

The Charter of Labour. The Charter of Labour was proclaimed on April 21st, 1927, by the Grand Council of Fascism, then still merely a private Council of the Party. It was not law in the formal sense, but a law of December 13th, 1928, gave the Government the power to make rules having the force of law for the complete fulfilment of the Charter. Already on July 28th, 1928, the Court of Cassation had decided that those parts of the Charter which had not yet passed through the formal process of law, and therefore were not law, were nevertheless principles which, "inspired by the most noble criterion of raising the moral and material level of the most numerous classes, could not fail to exercise their action on the interpretation of the laws already existent, relating them to the principles enumerated."

What are these principles? We have already quoted the fundamental proposition, which subjects all interests to the Government.[1] The Government is supreme, and in the name of the welfare of ensuing generations can properly exact sacrifices to-day. Then the Charter plunges into a labyrinth of generalisations regarding the relationship of individuals to society. Because "work is a social duty and only because of this" it comes under the control of the State. What can this mean? "The mass of production is a unit from the National point of view; its purposes are one, and can be summed up in the well-being of individuals and the development of national power." Is this any advance on anything hitherto conceived in other countries? We think not. Everything depends on the extent to which the one or the other of the two polar terms are considered. We can only discover what is meant when we examine the practice. The pronouncement has given ample opportunity to the students, professors, and publicists to belabour each other for placing too much emphasis upon the one or the other term. As usual, their enjoyment in the fray has left all of them with the feeling of victory and some with professorships, but the public is no better off.

In Articles 7 and 9, we reach the heart of the economic theory of the Charter. The first says: "The Corporative State considers private initiative in the field of production as the most efficacious and most useful instrument in the interest of

[1] See p. 219, above.

the Nation. Since the private organisation of production is a function of National concern, the organiser of the enterprise is responsible to the State for the direction of production. The reciprocity of rights and duties derives from the collaboration of the productive forces. The employed, whether technician, salaried, or manual worker, is an active collaborator in the economic enterprise, the direction of which belongs to the employer and who bears the responsibility thereof." The second adds, " The intervention of the State in economic production occurs only when private initiative is lacking or is insufficient, or when the political interests of the State are involved. Such intervention may assume the form of control, encouragement, and direct management." In brief, we have got no further than private property and enterprise, with intervention for the common good when the State thinks the common good in danger, and extremely vague and involved generalisations regarding the management of the business and distribution of rewards. Of course, everywhere in the world there has been a " reciprocity of rights and duties," but quantitatively the Fascists offer us no further guidance. These principles leave wide latitude for very great diversity of practice, in other words they are empty. They have led to great controversy, since collectivists put the emphasis on the phrases, " in the interest of the Nation," and " function of National concern," while the business men and the academic and journalistic sponsors of *laissez faire* even more loudly proclaim the superior nature of the phrases about " responsibility," " private initiative," and the rest.

Substantially, *laissez faire* has been maintained. Some remedies have, however, been applied to its defects. There is a comprehensive scheme of social assistance and insurance.[1] Collective labour contracts made by the associations include minimum wages, yearly holidays, full regulation of duties, discipline and dismissals, and arrangements for vocational education.[2] Employers' associations and trade unions have lost their former

[1] Measures against tuberculosis, malaria ; scholarships for children ; assistance to disabled workers ; insurance against accidents, illness, old age, occupational diseases.

[2] A remarkable number of these have been concluded for industry and agriculture : to the end of 1931, 400 National and inter-Provincial contracts, and nearly 8,700 Provincial contracts ; in 1932 and 1933, 239 of the former and 2,462 of the latter were published.

freedom. The Charter of Labour gallantly declared (Article 3): "Syndical or professional organisation is *free*." Then it went on to say, "But only the legally recognised syndicate, subjected to the control of the State, has the right to represent legally all the category of employers and employed. . . ." Lock-outs and strikes are criminal offences, and it is not, therefore, surprising that they have decreased.[1] The Fascist Government is proud of this decrease, but while it congratulates itself upon the technical advantage to production of reduced interruptions of work it still cannot honestly deny that the stress of class differences persists. Not a new spirit, but *force majeure*, has achieved a victory; and the victory has been won over overt acts and not over the state of mind or the justification of such acts. Perhaps certain Fascist enthusiasts will sometimes venture to breathe the hope that a new spirit is evolving; some, of course, shout that this is already appreciably in being. But they would not yet trust it without final provisions, especially, as they themselves admit, among the employers. The latter have not usually any reason to commit the crime of "lock-out." When economic circumstances are pressing, the workshop may be closed, and the courts are satisfied, if the matter comes to them, with the plain economic explanation.

There are no effective rights of election and control of their secretaries and officials by the rank-and-file. Again and again the Fascist leaders have expressed their determination to maintain the "hierarchical," that is the dictatorial, method in the associations. As regards the employers, one means among others to secure this end is the power of the authorities deriving from the law that no business of any kind may be established without a licence. When it is necessary and useful, a reliable Fascist may have to be included in the board of management or on the staff. But it is less necessary at present, though the future may

[1]

	Strikes			Strikes			Lock-outs—Industry	
	Notified cases			Numbers involved				
Years	Total	Agric.	Industry	Total	Agric.	Industry	Cases	People involved
1927	154	5	149	18,633	1,881	16,752	15	27
1928	69	6	63	2,964	59	2,905	8	35
1929	74	6	68	3,222	180	3,042	9	30
1930	75	9	66	2,830	201	2,629	7	33
1931	63	15	48	4,122	746	3,376	4	19
1932	21	7	14	593	280	313	2	5

be different, to subjugate the employers than the employees. For force resides in large numbers. As Lassalle once said, nothing can withstand ninety-five per cent of the votes. Hence if the workers' syndicates are tethered, that is enough.[1] All efforts, therefore, are made to draft into the Associations the safe men who have issued from the Revolution, preferably those who took part in the struggle to win over the workers to the Fascist syndicates in the early days, or those who have come from the Universities since 1922.

The syndicates were reorganised in the autumn of 1934, to form a more coherent and systematic substructure to the Corporations. The policy, begun in 1931, of taking away power and independence from the *local* associations and making these sub-sections of the provincial and national organisations, who now obtain supreme authority, was completed. This gives the Ministry of Corporations, which is the authority (with Mussolini himself as Minister) over all labour problems, fewer units to control, and puts the power more securely in its hands since its *direct* powers of nomination and sanction refer to the national and provincial stages.

However the Government does not rely upon the law alone. It manages through the Party, the municipal authorities, and the Inspectorate of Corporations, to get its candidates put forward and accepted—not by divisions, but by acclamation, *nem. con.* The dissentients can dissent at home! The president and secretary are under the discipline of the Fascist Party. Although this does not automatically exclude divergence of interest or friction, it ensures that friction shall rarely be openly

[1] The foreign observer, knowing the means of pressure available to the Dictatorship, is inclined to imagine that all Italian employers and workers have been drafted into the syndicates. The economic depression has probably contributed to keeping employers out, and, quite certainly, to force workers in as a means of getting preference for the work that is to be had or of obtaining assistance. Thus:

Percentage of Membership to Total in the Branch

Employers	1933	*Employees*	1933
Industry	60	Industry	87
Agriculture	25	Agriculture	70
Commerce	52	Commerce	62
Communications	40	Communications	66
Navigation by Sea and Air	45	Seamen	20
		Air	50
Credit and Insurance	50	Credit and Insurance	77
Professions and Arts	25	Artisans	63

expressed, that an accommodation shall be reached by private manœuvres, and at least a considerable restraint be exercised in the pressing of economic claims and counter-claims,

We must not overlook the fact that the associations offer a field of paid activity to thousands of Fascist officials. In 1933, the workers' contributions (graduated from about 10*s*. to 30*s*. a year according to pay received) amounted to something over 83 million lire, that is, roughly £1,300,000 ; the employers' contributions (so much for each worker) to 207 million, that is, roughly, £3,400,000. Out of this sum the Ministry of Corporations receives 10 per cent for its services ; 3 per cent is put away as a reserve to meet eventual legal claims ; 15 per cent go to the *Dopolavoro*, the Balilla and the schools for syndical officials. No reserves must be formed for strike funds. Though no one can give exact figures, a living wage is found for several thousand officials. The Italian worker and peasant, abnormally suspicious, are apt to regard these officials as exploiters. Against such murmurs, the Ministry of Corporations has steadily defended the payments to organisers—the work must be done, and the officials have not life-long tenure, as in the Civil Service.

Thus the associations have declined from being truly representative and militant organs of masters and workers into organisations for the better disciplining of labour and capital, run by Fascist officials subject to appointment, control and dismissal by the Government. But this does not mean that the workers are necessarily treated unjustly ; that depends entirely upon the zeal of the Government on their behalf. Industrial Courts, for example, settle individual disputes, and interpret and amend collective labour contracts. What has been lost is the former power to *compel* the employers and the Government to attend to the grievances of the workers. The employers may be able to bring the weighty arguments to bear at the Ministry of Corporations that the workers' demands or the Government's proposals will result in bankruptcy, that the consumer will not pay, that foreign countries will capture Italian trade. The Government is disgusted ; but it is difficult for it not to yield. As shown later, it attempted to maintain a reasonable minimum wage, but this resulted in such unemployment that the workers had to be

re-absorbed by a forcibly imposed forty-hour week at lower rates of pay. Some Fascist zealots, on the look-out for any argument to exalt the importance of the newly instituted Corporations, explain that, after all, the Trade Unions were only of service in a class state, and that since this has been overthrown by the Fascist system they have become merely bureaucracies for negotiation and supervising the observance of the collective contracts, but otherwise are entirely useless and should be abolished and their work done by a local agency of the Corporations. As a matter of fact there are schools in the large centres for syndical officials, where they can learn what corporate doctrine is, and how it should be applied. Their "statification," or (from another point of view) sterilisation, is ingeniously pursued. However though the Fascists wish to transcend the syndicates in a Corporation, that is in a mixed employer-and-employed governing body, it is not the general opinion that the syndicates should be destroyed. There must be an original spontaneous grouping of men according to their interests. Their independent views are the necessary nourishment of the State and the authorities. The Government cannot know all—it *must* hear the advocates themselves; it is not, as yet, by any means sure of the nature and services of the Corporations. And even that is not all. Politically, the régime *needs* the capillaries stretching deep into the groups which represent the original interests, so that it may the more effectively rule them. The employers hold fast to their associations because they do not wish to be crushed by the Government. The more democratic Fascists seek to maintain the associations because they recognise that from them come the vital opinion and criticism, the authentic sap. Those merely anxious for the preservation of the régime want vital workers' syndicates, because then the masses may be organised and kept loyal, and their massed force in reserve can be used, like a powder magazine, to persuade refractory employers into accepting its social policy.

Yet this potential force was cleverly divided by Mussolini in November 1928. Until then the workers were all affiliated to the General Confederation of Fascist Syndicates. The fact is that Rossoni is inflammatory and inflammable, and this great force under his direction threatened to set Italy in an uproar. During

1928 the congresses of the syndicates were marked by fiery unprompted complaints that the capitalists were still keeping up class warfare. This, and criticism of pressure on wages, drew the acclamation of the delegates. Rossoni spoke of beginning again the action which the Communists had been forced to abandon. Mussolini, to whom the employers complained, and for whom Rossoni was a liability, took prompt action. After devious manœuvres pretending to put into force Article 41 of the Law of April 3rd, 1926, which required the establishment of one great Confederation of employers and another of employees, he dissolved the latter. Rossoni was given the *douceur* of membership of the Grand Council.[1] So the forces of labour were divided. The pretext was that the employers' associations were not united. But that is the Fascist principle : divide and rule. After all, the masses can always be united when Mussolini commands.

Labour Courts. Since individual and collective disputes may no longer be settled by strikes and lock-outs, and since disputes nevertheless occur, industrial settlement is vested in the law-courts. This, of course, is no invention of the régime, but rather of democracies like Australia and New Zealand, which, about the time that Mussolini was born, having democratically established social legislation to provide a minimum of civilised existence for the masses, were then faced with the need of maintaining uninterrupted the round of industrial and commercial effort necessary to provide the national productivity to yield the promised standard of living. Pre-war and post-war Italy, also, had its arrangements for conciliation. The Fascist Government has systematised these experiments. A distinction is made between individual and collective disputes, the former relating to the application in an individual case of the contracts and customs of the enterprise, and the collective disputes, in the words of one of the acutest jurists, being " disputes which arise between legally recognised syndicates and one professional category and the other, within the order and for the regulating of the collective relations of labour arising between them."[2]

[1] I have heard Rossoni address an election crowd. In the course of his speech he had much to say in contempt of money. He looked well-nourished and was well-dressed.

[2] Eutimio Ranelletti, *Corso di Diritto Sindacale e Corporativo* (1934), II. 164.

Collective disputes come before the Courts of Appeal (of which there are sixteen) acting as Labour Courts. Each Court of Appeal has a special section composed of three professional judges and two experts. The latter are appointed for a year from a panel revised biennially, the names being proposed by the local Economic Council, which is composed of representatives of masters' and workers' associations. The experts must be of irreproachable moral and political conduct (that is Fascist), and possess a University diploma or its equivalent. Collective disputes can be brought before the courts only by the associations, and against associations. If they appertain to a Federation, Confederation, or Corporation, no action lies until the higher bodies have first attempted conciliation. Judgement applies to all the members of the association, and all workers and employers who are not members but work in that branch of industry and commerce. If the action relates to existing contracts, the ordinary jurisprudence relating to the interpretation of contracts applies. If the dispute arises out of the making of new contracts, the court judges by the principles of equity, harmonising the interests of employers and workers and protecting in every case, the "higher interests of production." Part II, Article 5, of the Regulations of July 1st, 1926, permits the challenge of a contract at any time after its making if "a sensible change in the facts existing when the contract was stipulated supervenes." This holds good for workers as well as employers. Article 88 of the above law says: "Unless the parties reach an agreement, proof of the economic condition of the business and of the cost of production can be made only by means of briefs and other documents exhibited by the parties, or published, cross-examination of the parties, judicial enquiry, and the evidence of expert citizens foreign to the business." The result of many enquiries on my part regarding the final grounds of such judgements, the standards that are adopted to distinguish rightful from wasteful managerial policy and so on, failed to elicit anything other than that the Court does its best with the statutes available (and they are obtainable from the Ministry of Corporations) to settle the matter. Both parties seem to pitch their demands at double what they expect is right, and the Court seems to halve the difference between them.

Of course the Magistracy has no independence in the sense of judicial independence as understood in England. Judges, like all other Civil Servants (this is the Italian law and doctrine), may be removed if they act incompatibly with the Government's policy. A representative of the Government must be notified by the Court that a case is to be called, and is present during the proceedings. He puts the " public " point of view in the course of discussion. No judgement may be rendered until the representative of the Government has delivered his opinion as to what it should be. The serious problems are thrashed out between the Fascist officials heading the associations ; and in the case of enduring differences, the offices of the Ministry of Corporations, the Inspectors of Corporations, or the Prefect are invoked. Many Fascists, remembering their own pristine demands for definition of principle, for intransigence, and hating the compromises and the "*combinazioni*" of the former régime, deplore these hurried attempts at peace, with the local Fascist Party leader as the go-between. But why not ? Business is business.

In individual disputes the plaintiff must notify the fact that he is about to take action to the association concerned. But the associations *need not* assist the plaintiffs. There is no obligation to include the expert laymen in these courts, unless a demand for them is made at once. These are the cases of immediate importance to the worker : his wage-envelope, the fines, the reprimands, the question of hours, punctuality, nature and quantity of his duties, industry, leave of absence, and the rest.[1] These were the problems that gave rise to the Workers' Councils in the days before Fascism, and in compensation for the abolition of which the régime should, to satisfy its democratic claims, have set up something as intimate, omnipresent and sensitive. Judged by these criteria, the courts have two serious defects. The procedure is more complicated than the old, and there are so many cases that the courts are in arrears. As to the first, not every worker knows the law. It is true that he can get aid from the *Dopolavoro* and the Party (if he is a member of the Party) and the Trade Union secretary. But this takes trouble, and makes trouble. He is obliged to explain the nature of his

[1] Toffoletto, *Controversie Individuali del Lavoro*, Milano, 1934, gives a convenient review of the principles and cases.

complaint to several people, to set in train a dispute which will be embarrassing to all parties, and to ask assistance of an official who is not elected by him as his trusted comrade to support his case. Therefore, though it is possible that the law would protect the man's rights if the dispute came before the courts, too many disputes do not. Before the courts the employer will be able to afford better legal assistance than the worker. Nor is there complete immunity from the fear of dismissal if a workman seeks his rights. There are dozens of ways in which employers can, and do, get their revenge. A solution proposed for both defects is to make disputes arising out of individual agreements between masters and workers subject to the same rules as those arising out of individual infringements of collective contracts, *obligatory* conciliation by the associations, and the giving of executive force to the result of the conciliation. The Councils have, indeed, a tremendous task, and if it were not for the actual, though not obligatory, intervention of the association to conciliate, the congestion would be fatal. The figures for 1933 show it. The number of workers involved is remarkably large, and the sums, too, are considerable. Further, these figures show a 10 per cent increase over 1932 in disputes in agriculture, a 40 per cent increase in industry, and about 35 per cent in commerce.

INDIVIDUAL DISPUTES SETTLED BY THE ASSOCIATIONS

	Total.	*Favourable Result.*	*Against.*	*Sums Recovered.*
Agriculture :	91,452	63,553	1,925	29,079,894 lire

Industry : 109,126 denounced ; 101,117 cases proceeded with ; number settled, 64,716 ; sums demanded, 54,301,467 ; sums recovered, 41,744,945 ; number of workers interested in the recovery, 288,705.

Commerce : Controversies, 21,478 ; sums, 20,244,416 ; of which 19,529 for 16,730,963 lire settled by Associations, the rest in Court.

Internal Communications : Total number of cases, 12,917 affecting 31,726 workers ; of which 7,528 conciliated for 19,126 workers, and 4,731,016 lire recovered ; and 867 in the Courts, affecting 1,902 workers, and 1,822,709 lire.

The lowest judicial authorities dealt with over 25,000 cases ; the higher instance with over 7,000 ; and the Courts of Appeal with over 3,000.

I

The Corporations

It is in the framework of a capitalist system thus subjected, at least in principle, and through established institutions, to the " Corporate " idea, but scarcely acting as yet in its spirit, that the Corporations have been established. In this framework, but also within the strong grip of a Dictatorship. This must never be forgotten : the will is the dictatorial will. The Party is everywhere; all the rest is almost routine administration. Mussolini's concluding debate on the Corporations (in an alleged " summary ") declared, " Corporations are the instrument which, under the ægis of the State, actualise the integral, organic and unitary discipline of the productive forces, with a view to the development of the wealth, the political power and the well-being of the Italian people." There is a tempest of controversy as to the meaning of this in terms of the functions which the Corporations are to perform. They have specific duties which we shall describe, but about their main purpose no one is yet certain.

One school[1] makes great play with the phrases " production a function of national concern," and " responsible for the direction of production to the State," in Article 7 of the Charter of Labour.[2] It holds that the Corporate State ought to mean complete State control of production and distribution, through the medium of Corporations consisting of employers and employed, and owning and co-operatively exploiting the capital of its particular branch of production, the employer, therefore, being transformed into the salaried director at the head of the productive pyramid. The Government would have final political control. This is very much like G. D. H. Cole's " Guild State," as discussed twelve years ago in England. It is founded upon an elaborate philosophy, purporting to show the identification of " the State and the individual and the individual and the State."

[1] I use the term school to represent broad tendencies. There is much dissension within various groups.

[2] Cf. Spirito, *Capitalismo e Corporativismo*, 1933 ; also *La critica dell' economia liberale*, 1930.

This is demonstrable in our own day, in the absorption of individual enterprise in large-scale enterprises and ultimately in the State, and in the realisation of the individual's own interest in the benevolent, harmonising, good offices of the State, or of its local authorities, or of large-scale industrial combinations. It makes the individual obedient to these higher entities, and at the same time they, even the State, become the expression of his individual interests. This school is not very large, although it is very attractive to young Fascists, who are generous and enthusiastic, and cannot get the rumours of Russia from their minds. It is regarded as too Bolshevist ; the majority of Fascists shout that it is lunatic and dubiously Fascist. In any case, it does not tell us whether distribution will occur on a non-profit-making basis.

Another school, mainly representative of the employers, says, " Hands off our business and property ! " The Corporation may make enquiries (discreetly performed), collect statistics, organise the employment bureaux and social welfare, lay down principles regarding the collective labour contracts, enter into negotiations where interests touch, and especially where they conflict. Further they would gladly devolve to them the free administration of Government regulations (if these must come), accept representation on the local governing authorities (in place of the popularly elected councils), and advise the Government regarding the measures it should take to increase productivity whenever the Government asks for advice, and also whenever it does not. But the Corporations are not to interfere with the individual enterprise. If they are to have any power of supervision and co-ordination, " in the higher interests of production," let it be a long-distance control, and the longer the distance the better. The State through the Corporate organs will intervene, " To avoid deviations, to correct errors, to fill up the holes and give the necessary main directions " to private industry. (Pirelli, October 16th, 1934, Congress of Confederation of Industrialists.) This is heresy to the democratic-collectivist school, well represented by Giuseppe Bottai, formerly Minister of Corporations and now Governor of Rome. But I am inclined to think that the bulk of employers in industry and agriculture stick fast to this heresy.

There is a middle school.[1] It is hard to find a name for it: perhaps "soul-improvement" school would be most distinctive. Private property will remain, they argue, and private initiative is still recognised as the soundest source of economic achievement. The Corporations' function is to generate a "Corporate" spirit. Employers will benevolently devote their property to public uses, and the workers and employees will give their work to the State and to the employers, who, after all, are technicians indispensable to the workers' welfare. As they look into each other's eyes, the Corporate spirit will be reflected from one to the other, and, as good Fascists, they will all do—what? Constitute the reign of social justice. As Rossoni, the labour leader, once answered the question, "What is a Corporation?", "The Corporation is not to be defined in legal terms. The Corporation is a state of mind. It is one big family." (Yet his finger rises in rebuke of the money-making single-mindedness of the employer!) The means to social justice will include all the techniques that the industrialists now claim; it will go beyond them however. The industrial firms must come under the controlling power of the Corporations, and there may even be branches of a Corporation to run the firm; but the Corporate property dreamed of by the quasi-Bolsheviks must remain a dream. In this middle school, there are some also who, without being employers, incline rather to a liberal economy. Such are Bottai, whom we mentioned above, and Mussolini himself. There are others, like Professor Gino Arias, who, without being proletarians, think in terms of the "just price" settled and enforced by the Ethical State. Similar to these last are Catholics like Signor Cavazzoni, who, in the Senate, thus acclaimed the new law: "Private initiative is an efficacious and useful instrument, which when well disciplined will be able to direct economy in the supreme interests of the Nation. The Corporation as now proposed responds to the wise Christian principle of peace: the Corporation will know how to found itself on the long Catholic tradition and will mark the beginning of a new order." In this climate of serious differences of principle,

[1] Thus Gino Arias, *Economia Nazionale Corporativa* (1929); and many articles since and speeches in the Council of Corporations; Bottai, *Le Corporazione* (1938); Biagi, *Scritti di politica corporativa* (1935). But the two latter are more practical-minded than Arias.

but superficial false good-fellowship, the Corporations have been born.

They are not based exclusively on separate economic activities or separate complete cycles of production, but on a mixed principle. Thus, the Textile Corporation includes representatives of the cotton trades, sheep breeding and wool growing, the woollen and worsted industries, silk breeding, silk-cocoon raising, silk weaving, rayon mills, jute, textile-dying, the carpet and allied industries, the wholesale and retail trade in textiles, the agriculture experts, the chemical trades, designers, and the co-operative silk-cocoon dyeing plants. All the various elements in all the great branches of production, from raw materials to the finished product, find a place in the appropriate Corporation. When these Corporations were being projected the tendency of producers was to make a Corporation for each productive activity. In other words the essential egoism of producers' groups could not be hidden. Each was anxious to safeguard itself, despite all the protestations of good-fellowship made by the Government and the other groups during the past decade. They evidently did not put their trust in the words of their fellow princes. The Government's résumé of the discussion (*Istituzione della Corporazioni Relazioni*, etc., 1933, Vol. I.) is very naïve. "The picture, as can be seen, is varied and in many parts discordant ; but this discord which, by the way, is, even greater on other points, is a symptom of the intense vitality of our world of associations, and of the fervour of thought ând faith which animates it. . . ." But this " vitality " and " fervour " would have meant hundreds of Corporations. The Government's experts would not permit this, since the central purpose was to produce governing bodies for industry, to foster the inter-relationship and harmony of interests. Give and take and Government persuasion produced twenty-two Corporations: Cereals; Fruit, Vegetable, and Flower; Viticulture and Wine ; Beet and Sugar ; Edible Oil ; Animal, Husbandry, and Fisheries ; Forestry, Lumber, and Wood ; Textile and Engineering ; Chemical Trades ; Clothing Trades ; Paper and Publishing ; Building Trades ; Water, Gas, and Electricity ; Mining and Quarrying ; Glass and Pottery ; Credit and Insurance ; Arts and Professions ; Sea and Air ; Inland Communications ; Public Entertainments ; Public Hospitality. To permit

of closer attention to their own interests, special sessions of the Corporations which include categories of diverse branches of economic activities may be instituted, the deliberations of which are subject to the approval of the Corporation. Further, two or more Corporations may be convened together for questions concerning several branches of activity, at the order of the Chief of the Government. Such united Corporations have the same powers as those given to the individual Corporations.

Each Corporation was made large enough to give representation to all the interests involved (thus there are sixty-five representatives in the Chemical and only twelve in the Beet Culture Corporation) but small enough to avoid too large a General Assembly. Even so, there are altogether some 800 members. Though the Assembly is mainly an economic advisory body, it may acquire influence, and therefore majority votes, and the distribution of representation among the Corporations, may become bones of contention. At present, however, the voting is taken by individuals, by separate groups, by employers and employed, which is appropriate to an advisory body.

The internal Constitution shows some interesting features. First, there is equal representation of employers and employed, though it is argued by adverse critics that there is no genuine representation since " authentic " workers, about whom Mussolini used to fulminate in the old days, cannot possibly secure selection, and that the Party members, academic men, are not friends of the workers. Secondly, each Corporation contains three members of the Fascist Party, one of whom is Vice-President. These " represent the public." This is the Government's answer to the fears that the Corporations, including only producers, whether employers or workers, would exploit the consumer. The future will decide whether these Party representatives, actually professors, teachers, journalists and Party officials, some with degrees in law and commerce, some without, can be really effective. Hitherto consumer's control has been exercised by the free play of the price mechanism, or by a freely elected Parliament with sovereign power. Either could put the fear of bankruptcy into the heart of producers. In Fascist Italy free price control has already been abolished over a large area of the economic field, and Parliament has no authority. The

power to act for the consumers is now solely in the hands of Mussolini and his Ministers. Upon what will they rely for effective control of the producer's tendency to exploit the consumer, and for correction of economic inefficiency?

That the Government does not rely upon the Corporations to act spontaneously to satisfy the consumer is shown by two facts. First, it has put its watchmen into the Corporations. Secondly, it has declared emphatically and often that the Corporations are not autonomous institutions, but parts of the State, which instructs and disciplines them for its service. In the Government's *Relazione*, already quoted, the good Civil Servant responsible for drafting it expressed himself forcibly on this subject: "All the proposals for innovations or legislative reforms tend to extend the functions of command of the Corporations. Now the judicial command, the power, that is to say, of ordering a person to give, do, or perform, is the prerogative of the State, or rather let us say 'is' the State. Therefore these proposals tend to enlarge the sphere within which the Corporations can issue commands, to the damage of that reserved to the State. . . . The Corporations are organs of the State, and it is not conceptually possible to have an opposition between the sphere of power of the one and the other. That which is of the Corporations is of the State, and if the Corporations command at all, it is the State which gives the command through their medium, just as it commands through the agency of any other organ."

The great danger, naturally, is that in the long run the twenty-two Corporations will become more egoistic than political parties, because they represent sectional interests, whereas the latter serve "national" principles. Already in 1926 the Rules declared: "The Corporation does not possess juridical personality but constitutes an organ of the administration of the State." Hence the declaration of Mussolini that the Corporations operate "under the ægis of the State." Hence also the provision that each Corporation is presided over by a Minister or Under-Secretary of State or Secretary of the Fascist Party, nominated by the Prime Minister. Corporations and Departments of State are in close contact, indeed practically in the relationship of servant and master. The attempt on the part of some Confederations, particularly of Agriculture, to convert the Corporations into

Departments of State actually exercising supervising, sanctioning, rule-making and jurisdictional powers, was most decisively repudiated by the Government. This, said the Government, would have " caused the downfall of the principle of responsibility and hierarchy which is the basis of public executive activity."

Yet many Fascists are still greatly disturbed by the paralysis of Parliament and the rise of these gigantic Corporations. They demand that a Council of the Fascist Party, outside or within the Council of Corporations, shall be the propelling and controlling body in the State. The fate of Parliament is still to be settled. When I advocated the maintenance of Parliament to my Fascist acquaintances, on the ground that a will-organisation, continuous and representing the whole undifferentiated mass of equal citizens in the Nation, was an indispensable organ of unity, they were very annoyed. Some began to bluster about Mussolini. Some blustered about the Corporations. The more sensible, who combined love of Italy with an intelligent appreciation of political history, agreed that there was danger in the Corporations *without* Mussolini and *without* Parliament.

Since 1926 the Corporations have been empowered to conciliate the controversies that may arise between the organisations affiliated to them; to issue regulations to promote, encourage and subsidise all efforts designed to co-ordinate and better regulate production; to establish employment bureaux wherever they are required and to regulate technical training and apprenticeship. For this purpose it issues general obligatory regulations and supervises their observance. The Corporations might regulate economic relations between the various categories of production if all the associations concerned agreed, and if the Prime Minister consented and the National Council approved.

It is now officially admitted that with such powers only, "the Corporations would have been impotent to penetrate more deeply into the sphere of economic conditions." Hence the law of 1934 adds a power of great potentiality : " to elaborate rules for the collective regulation of economic conditions and for the unitary discipline of production." According to the Government's memorandum, " this power makes of the Corporation the instrument of auto-discipline and control of economic activities.

It marks the definitive passing beyond the system of economic liberalism to that of Corporative economy." However I detect in the debates the usual display of formal but prompted enthusiasm about this added power, and no specific description of what the power actually implies. Some said, " We are going to find a synthesis between the Communism that we do not want and the Liberalism which has passed away." The big industralist Pirelli said " Hands off ! " However, this function can only be exercised when the competent Ministers propose it, or on the request of one of the associations constituting the Corporations, *with the assent of the Prime Minister*. Hence the power of the Corporations, and of any energetic association of employers or employees within it, is limited by the will of the Government. (This, of course, can be, and is, influenced *outside the Corporations altogether*.) Further, each Corporation may, within its own branch, establish prices for goods and services, but in this case it is again subject to the limitations we have just noted. But final power has not been left to the majority in each Corporation ; for all such rules of economic discipline and prices are subject to the approval of the General Assembly of the National Council of Corporations, and become obligatory only when they are published by decree of the Prime Minister. It would seem to me very difficult to get anything done under these rules. I doubt whether this is displeasing to the employers, especially the more considerable men like the head of F.I.A.T., and the Pirelli interests. In any case, the concentration of power in the Government is much more marked than its decentralisation to the Corporations. There are two other functions. The Corporations advise the administrative departments at their wish on all questions interesting their field of economic activity. The Prime Minister may compel Departments to seek such advice.

The Corporations, thus composed and empowered, have only just come into existence. But they were preceded in March 1930, by the National Council of the Corporations. This body was then composed of Seven Sections, constituted by Government decree, each representing the employers and employed in one great branch of production: Professions and Art ; Industry and Crafts ; Agriculture ; Commerce ; Internal Communications ;

Sea and Air Transport ; Banking. It was to these Sections that people referred when they pretended that the *Corporations* had already come into existence. The Prime Minister is President of the Council, and convenes it when he deems necessary. The Council now consists of the Councillors of the several Corporations, and further of certain Ministers, the Secretary of the Fascist Party, the presidents of various associations concerned with " social welfare," representatives of the associations of Public Service Employees, and ten persons with " special competence " in economics and law, etc. Altogether, then, an *omnium gatherum* of economic life.

Its advisory and rule-making functions need only brief reference. Broadly, the Council *might* be called upon to advise on any matter relating to the economic life of the country, with the emphasis on the relations between employers and employed. Not that the Government is obliged to ask for advice or take it when given, or seek it before it has independently resolved on a course of action. But in some cases the request for a statement of opinion from the Council is obligatory. The Council may grant power to all associations (after authorisation by the confederation to which they belong) to establish wages and conditions of labour in their own field, subject to the sanction of the Minister of Corporations. The actual *duties* of the Council were until 1934 to lay down rules (1) for the co-ordination of the social assistance work carried out by the associations; (2) for the co-ordination of the principles of the collective labour contracts and the other regulatory activities of the Corporations ; (3) for regulating collective economic relations between the various categories of production. The first and second could not, and cannot, be exercised except with the sanction of the Prime Minister, as we have already observed. Until the law of 1934, the third, which is the really important function, could not be used unless *all* the associations concerned were in agreement. Henceforth a Minister, or *any one* of the associations, will be able to initiate the use of this power. Altogether then, the powers of actual action come to very little. The National Council is rather like an enormous Royal Commission of Enquiry, but with the terms of reference spreading over the whole field of economic life, and with a continuous existence.

As such it is of very great technical value; for it may, as it is doing at present, prosecute enquiries not only into the problems of each industry but into their interrelationships and change its field of enquiry when this seems either too wide or too narrow; and, unlike a Royal Commission, it remains in existence *after* it has reported, to remind the Government that action was intended. As a body it meets rarely, and the preparatory executory and supervising work is naturally done in the various Corporations.

A smaller body, the Central Corporative Committee, which has advisory functions only, co-ordinates the work of the various bodies within the Council, and acts as the Assembly in urgent matters in the intervals between its sessions. It is composed of certain Ministers and the Secretary of the Fascist Party, the Vice-Secretaries and Administrative Secretary of the Fascist Party, the representatives of the Party in the various Corporations who are empowered to act as Vice-President, and the Presidents of the various National Confederations of Employers and Employees, Professions and Arts, and of the Institute of Co-operatives, and the Secretary General of the National Council of Corporations.

Significance of the Corporations. What, altogether, is the significance of this structure? Clearly the Corporations are not administrators of the property in their branch of production. Their basis is private property and enterprise. The field of labour questions has been more closely nationalised than in England; and the Government has created machinery through which to deliberate, negotiate, establish and watch the execution of rules. In England these things are implemented either by the Ministry of Labour, for example, through its own Employment Exchanges, or by voluntary co-operation between the employers' associations and the Trade Unions and Joint Industrial Councils. It has made the associations, and above them the Corporations, the executive authorities and the organs for authoritative advice on economic matters, strictly reserving final supervision and sanctioning power for itself. Their rule-making powers regarding prices and the economic situation generally are weak. Neither the Corporations

nor the Assembly are autonomous; they cannot override the principles laid down by Parliament, though they may regulate *within* them. They are not above Parliament, which by statute or decree can overturn anything they accomplish. Marketing schemes are formulated by and with their advice—their consent is not essential—and are administered by them. They are supposed to be a more agile, realistic and dynamic bureaucracy than the ordinary departments of State, to which in other circumstances such functions would fall. The machinery is particularly suited to the control of the modern economic system, in which the community demands political control, but tries to avoid the over-concentration of affairs in a bureaucracy hitherto trained in too formal and roundabout methods of business. Indeed, it is significant that the Fascist "Corporate" publicists call the ideas of Mr. Walter Elliot, the English Minister of Agriculture, to witness.

The Corporate system is one of the many possible means through which Socialism could be realised, if Socialism were wanted. But at the present moment the system is nothing but machinery to correct the faults of private enterprise, which is accepted as fundamentally sound. It has nothing to do with "social justice." Even its most enthusiastic supporters, like Giuseppe Bottai, have nothing to say about the division of the product of industry on any but the present system. Purpose and direction still lie with the Government. The Assembly and the Corporations have only the right of proposal, the Government that of decision. If it wants to force Socialism it can use the Corporations as an instrument; but the Corporations, now embodying no principle except that of greater production, could just as well become the instruments of obstruction for the employers, or for fraternising groups of employers and specially important groups of employees. The famous economist, Professor Luigi Einaudi (not a member of the Fascist Party), recently pointed out the possible danger of the Corporations becoming "closed" to invention, new ideas, new members, and so on; they might become entrenched defensive organisations of acquired rights. Fascist publicists replied very spiritedly that this would not happen, for the Party and its leaders were aware of this danger, and the virility of the Party, and the

principles of " changing the Guard " and " circulation of the blood," would keep the Corporations " open." We have yet to see. It throws a big burden on the Party. Further, it is not difficult to imagine all the rules entangling the Corporations being used by a few clever employers in collusion as springs to catch and hold up the socialisers. I do not wish to press this too far, but only to emphasise that the Corporations are instruments, rather than the embodiments of a policy. There may be, due to the machinery thus available, less conflict in industry, more rapid, co-ordinated, and expert advice, and this makes government easier for Mussolini and increases the well-being of the Nation. But the Government could be a Dictatorship without it, and could work well or ill for the nation without it; and has for many years conducted the economic management of the country without it. Most of the important economic decisions between 1930 and the present time were made by delegations to the Ministry of Corporations, the Ministry of Finance, and the rest. The ante-chamber is still open to the big and middle employers.

All countries have a corporate system to-day: they were corporate, indeed, long before Mussolini's power became absolute. But they are less organised, since the voluntary system of politics is in force. In England, for example, a vast apparatus of employers and workers' associations, Royal Commissions and Departmental Committees, Advisory Boards in the Departments, regular deputations, Trade Boards, Joint Industrial Councils, operations of the Board of Trade, the Home Office, the Ministry of Labour, the Treasury and the rest, Marketing Schemes, Quotas, and so on, attempts the work of co-ordination to the end of reducing waste and substituting the seeing eye of government for the " invisible hand " of Adam Smith. Technically, it may be that the looser is better than the more organised apparatus. That has yet to be seen. But two things stand out in recent discussions of the Corporations, and Mussolini is their most authoritative formulator: that nothing will be done in a hurry, and that the Dictatorship is the essential accompaniment. " We proceed with great calm. We do not precipitate matters. We are certain of ourselves, because, as the Fascist Revolution, the entire century is in front of us."

At this the crowd of delegates to the Assembly of the Corporations jumped to its feet, and there were sensational scenes of ecstasy. But, really, who has *not* the entire century in front of him?

The truth is that "social justice" is the direction which no Government in the world to-day can avoid, given the advanced and pricking social conscience of our time. It is not even postponable for long in Dictatorships. For force is not of permanent service, and, even if only as compensation to the workers for the loan of their lives in a coming war, as the Fascist leaders have frequently said, the dictators must supply them with a higher standard of living. And, then, I always suspect that Mussolini has a violent, if publicly controlled, nostalgia for Russia. His carping at Bolshevism is the carping of a lover, but in Italy the industrialists, the commercial magnates and the bankers, will not let him attain the object of his love. Since he prefers the continuance of his power to anything else which threatens it—he remains in power.

II

Economic Policy

A detailed investigation of the economic situation of Italy under Fascism is not part of the purpose of this book, but the main truths resulting from such an investigation are material and instructive. The chief results are clear: (*a*) the Government has not lacked energy: (*b*) it has conceived its task as concerned only with minor corrections of private enterprise, especially the socialisation of the losses due to the depression: (*c*) it has been no more successful than democracies in improving production, and it has been, perhaps, less successful than democracies in improving the justice of distribution: (*d*) at least as much, perhaps more, might have been done by democratic governments obedient to the more developed social conscience of our own day: (*e*) the incidence of taxation in Italy, always bearing unfairly on the poor, has certainly not been alleviated by the Fascism régime, and (*f*) Fascism has been a contributor in a special measure to the violent economic nationalism which has afflicted the whole world since the War.

For a fair judgement, we should not forget that Italy is only about one-third as well off per capita as Great Britain.[1] The standard of living has always been low, and it is extremely difficult for any Government to improve it very much, for there is a lack of minerals, and the soil, except in the North, is not fertile. This, however, cannot be made an excuse by a Government for worsening conditions by unwise policies. It is certainly not a reason for encouraging the increase of population.

Let us now regard the economic position from the standpoint of the chief classes which make up the Italian population. One-half of the people is occupied in agriculture.[2] Hence much attention must be paid to the agricultural population. Mussolini shows a special favour for agriculture, on the grounds that rural life is healthier and happier than town life; it is the source of a large population, and over-reliance on industry would put Italy at the mercy of foreign powers. It is not unfair to add that the agricultural population, especially the middle class and the wealthy owners and tenants, have had an influence on Government policy quite beyond the merits of the case. They were among the principal creators and early defenders of the régime, and perhaps they are its backbone still. They have been benefited by land reclamation, new roads, water supply, irrigation, the encouragement and teaching of improved technique, duties on wheat which make the Italian price three to four times that of the world price,[3] a subsidy on beet sugar which equally raises the price of sugar, a subsidy for silk-worm production, exporting and marketing schemes for rice (putting up the internal price to three times the foreign), and citrous and other fruits. Local government expenditure has been decreased to their advantage; land taxes have been reduced. But since 1926 they have suffered from falling prices and the loss of the capital value of their land. The day labourers, amounting to two-thirds of those employed on the land, have been promised better

[1] See Chapter III. above.

[2] In England only 6 per cent.

[3] The "Battle of the Grain" is part of the Public Works policy. The intention is to increase the yield per hectare to something like 16 quintals, and so make Italy self-sufficient in wheat. All went well until 1934, but then the weather brought the figure down to a little over 12 quintals, which is the usual figure in Italy unless there are really favourable seasons.

housing, but so far very little has been done. Save for the few thousand who have been able to find settlement on the reclaimed lands near Rome (not to be compared for size with England's great new cities of Dagenham and Becontree), and elsewhere, their lot has not been improved under Fascism—it has been slightly worsened. There is considerable agricultural unemployment.[1] The increased consumption of maize and potatoes in recent years and the decreased consumption of wheat, salt, and tobacco, is a sign of that, as of the condition of the workers in general.

The middle class of independent artisans and commercial people forms 5 per cent of the whole population. This class has not been favourably regarded by the régime, although it is its strong supporter. In commerce, certainly, the Government prefers the larger organisations. The influence of agriculture and metallurgy, textiles, the motor-car industry, sugar-refining, shipbuilding and banking, have engaged the Government's attention rather too much for it to have time to spare on the artisans and commerce. These people, however, have influenced the policy of the Government because, together with the petty landowners, they provide the savings, and seek fixed interest returns from Government stock. Hence when the problem of inflation was faced by the Government in early 1927, it took the step of deflating rather more rapidly and steeply than suited the bigger business people, or industrialists, or agriculture, whose interest-burdens became progressively more onerous with the fall in prices, thus giving a present of more *real* income to the middle-class creditors of the Government. This, however, could not go on for ever, for the results of the Government's policy was to provoke an economic crisis lasting from 1927 to 1930, producing, in that period, a fall in prices of 18 per cent, a first fall of general wages of about 10 per cent, with the natural accompaniments of widespread bankruptcy, and a rise in unemployment from 180,000 to 642,000.

To cope with this serious state of affairs, the Government began its much advertised policy of Public Works. This, however, meant more taxation. Then after the onset of the world-crisis, maturing about 1930, it became necessary to save certain

[1] About one-fifth of the total.

big banks which had lent money to industrial and commercial forms in the first crisis, and, finally, this could only be done by Government contributions to various reconstruction organisations. This again caused more taxation and a budget deficit, made worse by a falling off in revenue due to bad trade conditions.[1] And then, in the last stage of all, the Government was obliged to meet its deficits, in part by cuts in official salaries, in 1930 and 1934, and in part by great "voluntary" conversion operations on one-half the public debt, to bring down the rate of interest from 5 to 3½ per cent. Central and local government officials number nearly one million; and it is calculated by Professor Rèpaci of Torino that compared with 1914 the civil administration (officials, judges, teachers) have suffered a quite serious decrease of real wages, in some cases as much as 24 per cent. The Army is much better off.[2]

The bigger industrialists have received great benefits from the régime. The telephones and telegraphs were transferred to private enterprise. The estate duties were immensely reduced in order to promote the size and solidarity of the family. They are not bothered by strikes, though it is true the Corporations are a little troublesome, and one is obliged to give considerable contributions to the charity organisations of the Fascist Party. Yet the constantly increased tariffs, and the subsidies and loans already indicated, are more than a *quid pro quo*. The home market has been made quite safe for them. It is true that they would have preferred the deflationist policy to be less rapid, but they could not prevail against the final choice of Mussolini to fix the lira at 90 to the pound sterling, a figure so high in order to outdo France, which had fixed on the figure of 120 francs to the pound sterling. However, things were mending by 1930. For one thing the Government had wisely taken the opportunity of the crisis to extinguish all note-issuing banks except the *Banca*

[1] The deficits have been these, in round figures:

	Milliard Lire
1930–1 . . .	0·5
1931–2 . . .	4·0
1932–3 . . .	3·5
1933–4 . . .	3·3
1934–5 . . .	3·0

[2] Cf. the brilliant studies *La Finanza Italiana nel Ventennio*, 1913–32 (1934) and *Il Costo della Burocrazia*, *Riforma Sociale*, May–June 1932.

d'Italia, to reduce the number of petty banks, which abounded in Italy, and to subject the establishment of new banks to severe regulations. On the point of recovery, there came the world crisis, and with it the passing from the gold standard of England, Japan, and America. Mussolini elected to stay on the gold standard. In the speech at Pesaro[1] in which he originally announced the lira policy, Mussolini said he would "defend the lira with every drop of blood." No doubt it was necessary to speak in this manner, and to live up to it, for the Dictator must appear to be confident since the whole structure of credit and confidence depends on him. By far the largest proportion of Italian savings go, not into private business, but into the savings banks and the insurance companies, which are almost entirely in the hands of the Government. Yet the outer world goes its own way. It was ready to sell to Italy, but bought from the countries with a devalued currency. Italian foreign trade fell disastrously; both imports and exports fell away by two-thirds of the total. That had serious effects on unemployment. Almost as serious was the fact that imports were in excess, to be paid for by gold, for which the country was not prepared. (Emigrants' remittances and tourist expenditure had dropped disastrously, also.) The law requires that there shall be a gold reserve of 40 per cent in proportion to note issue. From spring 1934 onwards the approach to this minimum was within sight, and though not serious in itself, it had a most unsettling effect on all Italians with an interest in keeping the value of money steady. Between December 1933 and December 1934, there was a considerable flight of capital; one-fifth of the total gold holdings of the Bank of Italy were lost; and the Fascist Party much exerted itself to silence "vociferators." Yet either the standard had to go, or the Government must drastically force imports and exports to balance. It began a stern policy of prohibiting imports from various countries in order to make reciprocal quota arrangements with it, a policy proposed in 1934 by Signor Agnelli of the F.I.A.T. works.[2]

The situation is not pleasant for the industrialists and bankers, below the very largest, for whereas the latter have the ear of the Government, which cannot possibly do without them, short of a

[1] August 18th, 1926. [2] *Riforma Sociale.*

radical reconstruction of the whole economic system, the less considerable manufactures, contractors, and financiers, are subject to the Government's import, export, and exchange restrictions. They have very little influence in the Corporations, which are dominated by the big men and the Ministry of Corporations, which again means the influence of the big men. There is a law, made in 1931,[1] which restricts the erection of new plant or the extension of already existing plant. Permission is given or refused by the Ministry of Corporations. It is widely believed in Italy that the bigger industrialists decide the judgements to their own advantage. Indeed it has been suggested by Signor de Stefani that the procedure should be in open court, so that the public can be sure that the decisions are proper. In addition, for a short while, a law on Compulsory Amalgamation of industrial enterprise was operative—while it suited the big magnates.[2] Finally, the régime, partly for demagogic purposes, constantly vilifies the bourgeois, "the seeker after money." This does not cause the loss of profits in business, but it does cause the loss of social esteem. The régime says "Comrade!" to Signor Pirelli, the rubber magnate, but not to the smaller employers. However the régime has come to the aid of many of these, through the reconstruction institutes.

We come to the worker. His has not been a happy lot under the régime. Those in the protected and subsidised industries have done fairly well, but are no better off than before Fascism arrived. Certain socialised benefits have accrued to them, as to the rest, such as the *Dopolavoro*, the sickness and accident insurance schemes promoted by the Government, and the health, maternity and child welfare services for their families. To the mass of the workers, however, the crises, as managed by the régime, have brought a fall in real wages of about 10 per cent[3] on pre-Fascist conditions. To maintain the semblance of minimum wages, which had been stipulated in the collective contracts, syndical officials had to connive at the dismissal of men whose

[1] Cf. *Annali di Economia*, "*Lo Stato e la vita economica*," Padova, 1934, for a very able exposition of Italian economic and social policy by various authorities.

[2] Cf. Rosenstock-Franck, op. cit., for a discussion of this, as for the whole economic situation until the end of 1932.

[3] I follow the careful analysis of Rosenstock-Franck, pp. 155 to 162, but I do not take the lowest figures he takes, and which it is possible to take.

work was no longer wanted at the old rates, since exports were impossible and people were readier to lend to the Government for fixed rates than to buy goods to consume. Unemployment rose very swiftly.

	1930	1931	1932	1933	1934
July:	332,291	573,593	(June) 931,291	(June) 824,195	(June) 886,998
December:	642,169	982,321	1,129,654	1,132,257	961,705

This is in a total working population of five million in industry and two million in agriculture. Nor do these figures tell the full story, since many potential unemployed are sent back from the towns to their families in the country to live miserably there—outside the statistics. Provision for the unemployed is pitiful. By the terms of the law only about one-third receive any unemployment pay. The allowance is from three shillings up to nine shillings per week, according to the size of their contributions, which are graded. There are no extras for family. Then how do the unemployed live? The Fascist Party, and the parochial charities, give doles of money and food.[1]

Some of the potential unemployment, perhaps one-sixth, has been avoided by the Government's policy of Public Works. This policy has cost about sixteen milliard lire since 1926–27, or £256,000,000, if the lire is valued at sixty to the pound (since 1931). The money has been spent on repairing damage formerly done by earthquakes, clearing and improving ports and harbours, erecting public buildings, some, but not much, housing, roads, beautifying Rome, archæological excavations, the building of hydro-electric works, the electrification of the railways, "integral land drainage," aqueducts. The solution of Public Works, however, cost too much compared with the other items on Italy's budget, especially the military expenditure made unavoidable by her Austrian policy, her over-shrewd brokership between Germany and France, and her past policy towards Jugo-Slavia. Therefore there has been a reduction by one-half to two-thirds of commitments. What will become of the unemployed? Arrangements have been made, by consultation with the Corporations, for their gradual re-absorption in industry, and it is now reported that within the last two months about

[1] The *Libretto di Lavoro*, a kind of Identity Book for workers, has now become compulsory. It is irksome.

200,000 have already found work. Yet surely this must be at the cost of lower wages for those already employed ?

A particularly interesting feature of Fascist economics is the incidence of taxation it maintains. It claims to be a democracy : it promises " social justice." It has always been an important element of democratic policy to increase the amount of revenue from direct, and decrease the amount from indirect, taxation. On this basis, it is calculated[1] that in England in 1930–31 the richer part of the population was taxed to the extent of 70 per cent and the poorer 30 per cent. In Italy the figures are these :

	1921–22	1931–32
Direct . . .	38·59%	28·41%
Transfer of wealth .	16·89%	21·61%
Indirect . . .	24·08%	29·45%
Monopolies . .	17·95%	17·18%

Thus in the tenth year of Fascism (and the situation is still the same) indirect taxation, and monopolies like tobacco, sugar and matches, amounted to 47 per cent of the revenue. We would not be making too bad a guess if we divided the Transfer of Wealth Taxes (registration and stamp duties on almost every conceivable document) between Direct and Indirect, which would make about 60 per cent indirect and 40 per cent direct, very nearly the reverse of the English system. It ought to be remembered that the democratic governments had raised Direct Taxation from 28·5 per cent in 1913–14 to 38·59 per cent in 1921–22.[2]

Finally, all the philosophy and the actions of the Duce, but especially his foreign policy, his extraordinarily strong desire to obtain " diplomatic initiative and independence " on a military basis, has necessarily pressed the Government to fierce economic

[1] Cf. Sikes, *British Expenditure and Revenue since the War*, 1934.

[2] Cf. Rèpaci, op. cit. In 1931–32 the Budget of roughly £350,000,000 fell into the following branches, in percentages :

	per cent		*per cent*
Defence . . .	28·74	Justice . . .	2·95
Financial Services .	11·14	Economic Improvement	5·50
Public Works . .	18·47	Roads . . .	8·77
General Administration .	8·96	Social Assistance .	0·98
Education . . .	9·39	Foreign Representation	1·15
Police	5·87	Colonies . . .	2·59

nationalism. It is of little use speaking peace and free trade, if one refuses to pay the price for it.

Now Fascism gave as one of its chief reasons for overthrowing democracy that it was not a system with its own *national* policy, but was rather a faulty balance of economic bargains between pressing egoistic interests. Yet the truth is that the Fascist régime has followed exactly the system of Giolitti, rotating the advantages, but with the least benefits to labour. Whereas Giolitti acted silently, Fascism has constantly and audibly claimed to be "national." It, too, has followed the interests of its supporters.

Note on Wages.

Evén if we give the fullest credit to the Fascist Government for honesty in its cost-of-living and wage indices (and there are good reasons to believe we ought not), the situation in the last six years has not been happy for the worker.

Hourly earnings (in terms of money) in Italy, for men and women, skilled and unskilled, in mines, industries, public services, etc., based on 1929 = 100, were 98 in 1928 and 81 at September 1934. Expressed in "real" terms, however, there was a rise over this period from 99 to 110. *Weekly rates* of money wages in Great Britain and Northern Ireland, also to base 1929 = 100, stood at 100 in 1928 and 96 in September 1934. Expressed in "real" terms, there was a rise from 99 to 110. The general level of hours of work in Italy, according to the Fascist General Confederation of Industry, was 181 per month in June 1928, 173 in June 1933, 175 in June 1934, 176 in September 1934, and 181 in October 1934. It is interesting to compare these figures with those showing the percentages of workers working less than normal, normal, and more than normal hours. These statistics are compiled by the Ministry of Corporations. In June 1928 11·7 per cent of workers worked under forty-eight hours per week, 74·6 per cent worked forty-eight hours, and 13·7 per cent worked more than forty-eight hours. In June 1933 the corresponding percentages were 20·0, 70·6, and 9·4; in June 1934 28·7, 62·8 and 8·5; in September 1934 27·8, 63·5, and 8·7; and in October 1934 30·3, 61·9, and 7·8. Thus, although average hours of work per month are stated to have been the same in October 1934 and June 1928, the proportion of workers working less than forty-eight hours weekly was more than two-and-a-half times greater in October 1934 than in June 1928, and the proportion working more than forty-eight hours weekly had been almost halved. It is impossible, of course, to deduce average weekly hours from the Ministry of Corporation's statistics, since we are not told how much under and over forty-eight hours is the average working week for persons falling into the under-normal and over-normal groups. It would seem likely, however, that the average working week in June 1928 approximated closely to the "normal," and that the average in October 1934 was considerably below the "normal." Ignoring all this, one is only left with the average monthly hours, which are stated as having been exactly the same in June 1928 and October 1934. Taking these figures, the 11 per cent rise in real hourly earnings represents a similar increase in real monthly earnings. Comparing June 1928 with June 1934, and December 1928 with December 1933, however, there would appear to have been a reduction of working hours of about six to eight hours per month, say three to five per cent. If one allowed for this, real monthly earnings would be taken as having increased by about 7 per cent only. Regarding British hours of work, statistics are not given in the issues of the "International Labour Review" from which the above have been taken. According to the Ministry of Labour the aggregate net

decrease in weekly hours during 1928–34 inclusive has amounted to about 763,350 hours. Spread over the whole body of workpeople this represents a decline of something between one-tenth and one-fifth of one per cent. Therefore, the increase of 11 per cent in real weekly rates of wages in Britain may be taken as representing an 11 per cent increase in real hourly rates also. The wages of male Italian agricultural workers fell from 1·73 lire per hour in June 1927 and 1·59 lire in June 1928 to 1·11 lire per hour in September 1934. The corresponding averages for women were 0·98 lire, 0·91 lire and 0·66 lire. These statistics relate to "regular and casual day labourers, generally without board or lodging." In Great Britain minimum wages of male agricultural workers averaged 31*s.* 8*d.* per week in September 1927, the same in September 1928, and 30*s.* 11*d.* per week in September 1934. The statistics relate to "ordinary workers, generally with board and lodging." "Real" agricultural wages are not given, nor is information regarding hours of work in agriculture. The money wage decline in Italy from June 1928 to September 1934 has been 0·48 lire, or 30 per cent for men, and 0·25 lire, or 27 per cent for women. For industrial, etc., workers a money wage decline of about 17 per cent between 1928 and September 1934 corresponded with a real wage increase of about 11 per cent. A 27 to 30 per cent decline in money wages thus represents, roughly, a fall in agricultural wages on the same scale as the cost of living fall. This contrasts sharply with the position in Britain, where the (money) minimum wages per week, for men fell 9*d.* per week, or about 2½ per cent, between September 1928 and September 1934, representing an increase in "real" terms approximately equal to that applicable to industrial, etc., workers over the period 1928 to September 1934, viz. 11 per cent.

All this must be taken together with the fact of very considerable unemployment.

Part VI

Chapter XVIII

THE SPIRITUAL GAINS AND LOSSES OF FASCISM

What has Fascism taken away from Italy's spiritual life, and what has it given ? The answer depends on facts which cannot be measured exactly, like a temperature, and on the highly subjective judgement of their value to the individual. I believe that Italy has, on the balance, suffered a very serious loss.

Since it is dangerous to think in Italy, and there are abundant rewards for simply repeating what the leaders say, there is a loss of creative thought. The legal and the social sciences, which are supreme because they offer direction to humanity, have become merely slavish commentaries. The young men are anxious to justify the work of the régime in their theses and their lectures. The professors are anxious to expound to their students and to the public the absolute virtues of the official creed and works. The journalists use their literary power to popularise difficult conceptions, in repeating, *ad nauseam*, the same phrases. There is a philosophic inbreeding. There is no rationalist philosopher in Italy, no anti-Corporative economist, political scientist, or jurist. Not that there is no private philosophic discussion which does not seriously question the system. The freedom of small groups without organisation and without public repercussion is permitted, because it would be impossible to root them out, and Mussolini is anxious to learn and by auto-criticism to keep the régime from stagnation. Yet considerable caution is required even among the chartered few. What is worse is that the rising generation, which should be marking out new paths in every field of the social sciences, is lost ; and the older generation cannot, for its very life, do more than hint in private at the existence of things which are not to be found in the Fascist philosophy. What novel thought exists in Italy is of foreign origin, and here there is a surprising latitude : De Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, the *Communist Manifesto*, *Trotsky's Life*, and many books about America and Russia have recently been

translated. The foreigners are the heretics ; and the wish to read heretics evidently exists. The freedom to emulate them, and the products of such freedom, are lost.

The limitation of liberty has produced a corresponding loss in the quality of the governing class of the country. Many, o course, are excluded because they are hostile to the régime. Many who have had to leave the country have left behind no equals in intellect, nobility of conscience, or humane purpose. Within the Party itself there are no public elections of the governors ; there is no open competition, or display of talents and public cross-examination. The method of selection is by hearsay, passed on in private letters and whispers. There is no public control, with all the fears of detection which that awakes in the potential slanderer, or even in the merely careless or mistaken. Those who are chosen may be good men ; but there may be better. How do the leaders know that there are not ? Those who make the ultimate choice do not need to be ruthlessly careful in their search for talent, for they themselves are not amenable to public criticism. Their power is not threatened.

Fascists say, in answer to these observations, that the Duce keeps on the watch for new men and for incompetents. The rejoinder to this is twofold. First, the Duce cannot be everywhere, to see and hear everything. One of the advantages of the democratic system is that democracy is everywhere, and can see and hear all that happens. Democracy has millions of eyes. Secondly, the assumption that Mussolini is miraculously vigilant settles the question of what will happen when he goes. The régime itself recognises what this means, and tries to overcome the difficulty. But from all sides one hears complaints of the incapacity of the system to produce a really competent governing class. Nor can time bring improvement, if we are to judge by the present products of Fascist education.

I will not pretend that a democratic system offers no scope for intrigue, or that considerations other than those of the capacity for office never decide who shall be the occupant. In democracies, however, the leaders of importance are the best that can be obtained in a system in which everyone strains to convince the public of his merits, publicly produces the evidence thereof, and is obliged to answer his opponents' evidence against him. It is

true that the majority, at which Mussolini has so often sneered, makes the selection, but it does not lack sifted information, and there is a selected and responsible part of the majority which takes the lead.

Liberty in government is not important merely because the Government is compelled to explain and defend its policy, but equally because, as a by-product, it induces a very healthy process of self-questioning, and examination of the terms of its trust. In Italy, there is little to cause the Government to question its own assumptions, if we exclude Conscience, God, History, the Nation, the " objective will," and the possibly representative character of the men at the head. Outside such Fascist task-masters there are neither spurs nor bridles.

It is true that Mussolini soon learnt that his Revolution had not been a Revolution in the sense that the whole country was permeated, or quickly permeable, by an idea. He encountered opposition, from the leaders of industry in particular. Moreover the Party zealots and the bureaucracy have been obliged to act in economic matters considerably at the dictation of world influences. Yet it seems to me that Italy would have been better off if there had been free political opposition to call attention to impending errors. For example, the country would not have proceeded under more than full steam along the path of governmental expenditure for Public Works and other services, until a Budget deficit such as that reached in 1934 compelled a drastic reversal of general economic policy. So too with the valuation of the lira, which was made a matter of life and death by the Government at the end of 1927, to the immediate scoring of a vain triumph over France, but to the ultimate damage of Italian exports and the employers and employed who lived by them. Though the social services have been developed, in a free system much more might have been done, and much less spent on military forces to bolster up the quest for international " glory." If there had been free criticism in foreign affairs, the policy of aggrandising Germany in order to humble France would not have been pursued as it was until early 1934, to the point where Germany was so truculent that she could break faith with Italy, cause her grave trouble on the Austrian frontier, and insolently sneer at her objections (pitched now in a minor

key) at unilateral denunciation of disarmament engagements.

The Fascists say they took away liberty from the Italian people because they were too ignorant to use it responsibly. They have erected a number of institutions, like the Corporations, intended, they allege, to educate the public in the affairs of the nation. What are the observed facts? Arguments are not pressed to their full limits, and the implications of the Government's decisions are as little appreciated as is the case against them. Even from the Fascist standpoint, propaganda is insufficiently thorough. There is only one Party, with two million members, a large proportion being merely passengers. How could there be sufficient advertisement to convince everybody, or even to reach everybody? It is not necessary to persuade all the people, although it is desirable to obtain a unanimous plebiscite. In a democratic system, as every candidate and election agent knows, it is necessary to do one's best to reach every voter, since any single vote may be the vote that secures the victory. Not so in Italy. It is enough to carry the more effective members of the Party with you, they must be kept in good humour; and if the rest of the population can be reached, well and good. Nothing, however, compels the régime to come down to them, and to demonstrate the value of its own proposals by comparison with others put before the public by a determined opponent.

It must further be remembered that public affairs in the modern State can only become known to the masses if there exist people with an interest in, and an ability to awake questions in, their minds. How can the masses, preoccupied with the care and toil of making a living, sometimes too poor of mind to think for themselves, seeking the fulfilment of their lives in family cares and non-political culture and recreation, ever achieve an insight into public affairs, which to-day embrace the whole world, unless there exist men and women with the stimulus to arouse a questioning attitude in them? For the mass of mankind the natural tendency is to take the things they encounter for granted, as much in the realm of political and social institutions as in the shape and actions of Nature. People with nascent ideas need great encouragement to dare to utter them. The comparatively small proportions of sensitive consciences and speculating minds must

be let loose upon these to awaken doubts, and, as Lassalle once said, to shake their " damned wantlessness."

There is a graver count. The exclusion of publicity regarding the deciding reasons of many branches of public policy, and the deliberate distortion of facts and figures, deprive the social and economic scientists of the data indispensable to the progress of knowledge.

Therefore those in Italy who, perhaps quite sincerely, have all their lives cried out for the " elevation " of the people, have brought about a situation in which the rulers are elevated but the people palpably degraded. The leaders are not compelled to listen, and therefore there is no point in equipping one's self to achieve their conversion. The lower ranks are not encouraged to speak in perfect frankness, and it has been said by someone that the device which should be written up over the Federal offices of the Party should be, "Here nothing bad is said about anybody!"

The nation with the best prospects of civic education is the nation which can freely turn its public life into a nation-wide debating chamber. Such was Italy until 1922. It was rowdy, quarrelsome, slanderous, and sometimes violent. To cure its excesses the very system itself was swept away. In the new State the people do not learn the important art of composing their differences, which are inevitable, by free and reasonable argument and compromise. The Government steps in, and settles the matter out of hand. An example at the very root of Italian affairs is the problem of the class war. After so many years of coercion, Fascists admit, as though letting you into a profound secret, that the class war continues. They do not use the word " war " any longer, but replace it by " tension " or " differences." The only thing they have abolished is overt conflict. The class war mentality is still extant; distinct and hostile classes still confront each other. The war continues—but where? In the factories and agriculture, when bargains are made for wages and profits; in the Ministry of Corporations, when the interests come to plead their cases. Instead of letting both parties to the class war learn by experience how far their demands upon each other were just and practicable, even by violence to each other, the Fascist movement applied the violence, and this mainly to the workers, for whereas property is

static, force resides in the masses. The lesson that had to be learnt has not been learnt. We concede, of course, the gain of ten years' uninterrupted production. The Fascist may plead that propaganda in favour of national unity will in time accomplish the supersession of class. Will it ?

In order to achieve its objects, Fascism has been obliged to dismiss the Past, or, when it remembers it, to slander history, which remains a silent but ever mocking observer. Happily, it is not entirely possible to destroy the cultural harvest of so many generations. The arts of printing and reading have made " totalitarian " and long-enduring Dictatorships impossible. If the Dictator is a well-read man they weaken even his resolution. The denunciation of democracy, for example, to the children simply arouses their curiosity. For the sake of efficiency Fascists are compelled to honour and admit intellect ; and too many of them know that they have themselves not produced enough to justify the repudiation of the past. The libraries are still the organised opposition in the Fascist State. Yet the full effect of literature and history cannot be brought to bear upon the public mind. Only the parts that support the Fascist view can seep through to form the mind of the adult population and the young. Half a brain is worse than none.

The control of the public mind is not absolute. To achieve that one would have needed at least to begin with an absolute Idea. Neither Mussolini nor his lieutenants possessed such an Idea, nor, in spite of ten thousand books, including the Duce's, has one yet been found. There is uncertainty and fumbling. Consequently, the light of the contemporary mind and the gleam of the ages still shine through the chinks, to Italy's great advantage. It is the heretic that blesses Italy, the non-Fascist who keeps the body politic healthy by his surreptitious pinches of salt. The Catholic Church is one such heretic, a powerful opponent of Mussolini's militarism. Here and there are economists, political scientists, and jurists, who, non-Fascist and anti-Fascist as they are, should be rewarded by the Government, because they save it from bad mistakes, and add to Italy's prestige wherever the learned congregate. For the rest, the régime is occupied in giving the Italian a character in place of brains, and in encouraging the flight from Reason.

The imminence of Force as the final argument in public affairs causes exclusion of the most sensitive consciences and scrupulous minds from full participation in them. These, who are the real *élite* of the world, and whose protection from the bullies should be the special concern of a civilisation, must in self-defence retire from politics. What a loss to Italy ! The jack-in-office who fills the subordinate rôles in a Dictatorship does not need to satisfy himself, or others, of the objective rightness of his policy. Sheer anger with an opponent may be immediately transfigured into a political principle, and applied by main force. The prominence of force in the Fascist system seems to me to vitiate any substantial relevance to it (often asserted) of Carlyle's teaching on Heroes and Hero-worship. Carlyle says :

" Worship of a Hero is transcendent admiration of a Great Man. . . . No nobler feeling than this of admiration for one higher than himself dwells in the breast of man. It is to this hour, and at all hours, the vivifying influence in man's life. . . . Hero-worship, heart-felt prostrate admiration, submission, burning, boundlessness, for a noblest Godlike Form of Man—is not that the germ of Christianity itself ? . . . is not all Loyalty akin to religious Faith also ? . . . Society is founded on Hero-worship. All dignities of rank, on which human association rests, are what we may call a *Heroarchy* (Government of Heroes), or a Hierarchy for it is ' sacred ' enough withal ! The Duke means *Dux*, Leader ; king is *Kon-ning*, man that knows or *cans*."

Well the answer is that Dux will smite, and King will shoot ! Italy had, and has, no free opportunity for the spiritual contention, the matching of one against the other in full public array, so that people may judge to whom to offer their loyalty as the Hero. No, the analysis of the morale of soldiers made by Mussolini in the trenches can be applied to the membership of the Party of which he is the Hero. Only a small proportion are Fascists in the essential meaning of the term. The rest are complying with the law, and prosecuting their interests in the most convenient way. When all these, and the youngsters, are excepted, not a very large number remains. Why should the intense loyalties of a few thousand men be taken as the measure of a Hero ? They might be mad.

It is claimed that Italy is being moralised under the régime,

ennobled, taken beyond the petty preoccupation with material welfare. I categorically affirm, from direct observation, and from the admissions of good Fascists, that Italy is being demoralised. The vacant-minded repetition of uniform phrases and songs and salutes, even when repeated by millions of people, cannot be called moralisation. To be moral is to have inwardly striven for the conviction of truth.

It is even strongly open to doubt whether the Fascists are able to secure what they allege to have most at heart : a sense of national unity. I suppose this would mean that all citizens should voluntarily and spontaneously think of their Nation as an entity, the preservation of whose claims on the rest of the world, and whose internal order and amenities, would merit ample sacrifices on their part. It is a sense of community, rather than of commanded uniformity. It is true that the Fascist régime teaches the idea of community, and of sacrifice on its behalf. True also, and beneficial, that reductions of railway fares and the work of the *Dopolavoro* enable Italians to get to know their country as never before. But what are the nation-building methods ? As in other countries, they dwell on the nation's contributions to art, letters, and the sciences, the valour and devotion of its heroes. There is a strong emphasis on the past and potential hostility of the rest of the world, and the need for a belligerent attitude towards it. Let us admit that this educational process has some success.

Other factors in the dictatorship have tended to destroy such voluntary unity as before existed in the free association of men in their political parties and economic associations. The Dictatorship has rendered all individuals suspicious of each other. They may bring all sorts of trouble on themselves by a chance remark. The man you talk to in the park, the train, or the restaurant may cause you harm, and you must beware of him. The Italian in the Party is divided from the Italian outside it ; the workman in the Fascist Unions, is sundered from his fellows outside ; the local political leaders are suspicious of each other. The Government is divorced from the people, though it renders services to it. The Corporations are held together very loosely, but each commands its own field of economic enterprise. Mussolini stands for national unity, but his system thrives on

division. There is nothing to equal freedom as a builder of genuine fellowship.

If the Dictator pretends that he is the saviour of the country he must persuade his followers that there is something to be saved—the territory, the possibility of expansion, or the civilisation. He must rouse in them a wish to maintain the values that he alleges are threatened. He must therefore make them proud of objects which they had previously taken for granted ; and, I think it may be said, decent pride is not the word, but vanity, and even swollen-headedness, rising in the more susceptible to a veritable megalomania. Every simple difference becomes a superiority in favour of the Dictator's country. The Dictator is forced by his own position, and the continual need of stimulating the loyalties to him, to pursue a robust foreign policy. Hence Mussolini has taken the lead in European affairs wherever possible. Although many of his principles, such as the advocacy of the revision of the Treaty of Versailles and his plain outspoken comments on disarmament, are sound, his tactics have surely not been for the good of Italy or Europe.

The hands which murdered Dollfuss were raised on Mussolini's own theories of violence, the " right of revolution," as elaborated during his own revolt against the Italian Parliamentary system, and as taught by his publicists to Hitler, Göring and Goebbels. Was it really any use for the *Corriere della Sera* to speak in this wise (July 29th, 1934) : " Nazism, pressed to paroxysm by an inconceivable state of folly and aberation, adopted crime as the political instrument of destruction, butchery, and terror. But the civil world, which has not lost the moral consciousness of the human value of life, has unanimously objected." And on the day before : " Even had they won power there would not have triumphed with them the will of the majority nor even the aspirations of an enlightened minority, but rather the blind destructive fury of a nucleus of sectarians without followers and merely representing wild foreign ambitions."

A Daniel come to judgement!—Violence; will of the majority!

The pity of it is that Mussolini did not act upon this truth from the beginning. He would not then have had to fear for the Bolzano frontier ; he would not then have had a Germany making overtures to Yugo-Slavia ; he would not then have, what

is probably even worse for him in the long run, a Germany which has remade itself by Fascist methods, which has been lauded as a triumph for Fascism, but which now despises and insults Italy and may yet take social paths which will require a good deal of explaining away in Italy.

This is the nemesis of the nationalism which is artificially created to maintain a dictatorial system. It turned Mussolini against the Little Entente, when the Little Entente was Francophile ; it turned him against the League of Nations, which suited Germany's book ; it even makes him boil over with envy of England, which is too powerful to submit to his admonitions.

What is the end of such tactics, employed by a country whose resources are so modest ? The honest broker will fall under international suspicion, or his speeches will be listened to with diplomatic courtesy but without practical effect. Does this serve *Italy's* interests in the long run ? or her moral significance in the opinion of the world ? or even the Dictator's personal position ?

A nation can escape, and help other nations to escape, the danger of war by acting justly and modestly. If it chooses to pass into the sphere of active manipulation and wire-pulling it must be ready, if not to attack others, at least to defend itself from the anger of those who have been made catspaws. This inevitably implies armaments, military education, and expenditure.

I cannot believe that militarisation is a quality to be over encouraged in the warm-hearted, kindly, convivial, spontaneous Italian nature, which is so lovable. It is true that such people in the past have been liable to bullying by international brutes. The way to avoid the bullies, if this is all that is wanted, is to have an appropriate defence, and support the League of Nations. How strong can a country be when acting by itself ? How strong can Italy be without impoverishing itself ? Mussolini has said that a poor country cannot afford freedom, and he has abolished it ; can a poor country afford a spirited foreign policy ?

Fascism pretends not only to govern, but to civilise. Is it producing anything of worth ? We shall state simply what seems to be producing, and that with more modesty than the Fascists themselves because we recognise, with Mussolini, that " ten years of the life of a Nation are like an atom in the life

of a man." (April 5th, 1929.) Let Mussolini speak, and then we can compare his desires with the actual nature of things as we have observed them, and as candid Fascists admit them.

" The Fascist virtues are tenacity at work ; the extreme parsimony of gesture and word ; physical and moral courage ; absolute loyalty in personal relations ; firmness in decisions ; affection for comrades ; hatred for enemies of the Revolution and the Fatherland ; unlimited faithfulness to an oath that has been taken ; respect for tradition, and at the same time the desire of accomplishment for the morrow " (*Almanac of the Fascist Association of Elementary School Teachers*, 1934, p. 92).

Fascism fosters, and cannot avoid fostering, the exact reverse. It puts a premium on successful humbug, flattery and bluff. Neither the highest nor the lowest are exempt from this. If these were Italian characteristics, Mussolini has not corrected them but aggravated them. Perhaps the school-children must be counted as innocent, for they have learnt nothing but what the Fascists have thought it right to instill in them. But the older people know that in every avenue of life they can make their way quicker and with less effort by repeating what they know to be untrue ; and they do so. Fascism achieves the result achieved by all Churches which have preferred worship to godliness : the creation of humbugs and panders. How far this goes can be seen from the report of the *Messagero* on September 17th, 1934, on the introduction of the valediction, *Viva il Duce !* at the end of letters written by Fascists. This action was taken by the Secretary of the Fascist Party in relation to Mussolini, but the same kind of thing goes on every day all through Italy in the relation of any citizen to the authorities. The report runs thus :

" The National Directorate of the Fascist Party, the offices, and the dependent organisations, have adopted—on the initiative of the Secretary of the Party—in place of the musty and insignificant courtesies, the motto, *Viva il Duce !* : an invocation of a faith, typical and sincere expression of homage, significantly Fascist. In the correspondence of the offices—logically speaking—the use of any other expression is not in fact admissible. It is the feeling of the Honourable Starace, particularly vigilant and alert in matters of

style, that has drawn attention to this imponderable and mystic need of substituting for the wan, old fashioned salutes the *Viva il Duce!*: a plain and exciting phrase which is in keeping with our spirit and our everyday thought. Black Shirts, even in their private correspondence, ought not and may not forget this well-defined exclamation, which is supposed to mean an exchange of faith, watch-word, viaticum for every battle and every conquest."

Mussolini forbade the carrying out of this regulation, it is said, on the ground of its despicable humbug. In such matters Mussolini's own character, which he would like to impress on the Italian people, can govern the situation. He has, however, made the supreme mistake of not recognising that he is exceptional and different from the mass of Italians, that he can change their external behaviour but not their hearts.

Groans are not words, nor agony assent,
Nor affirmations truth, if nature's sense
Should overcome the soul into a lie. . . .

The bourgeoisie are still in the land, a stumbling-block to the intentions of the régime. They are not prepared to sacrifice their goods, their positions, and the social and economic defences around their children, in order that others, of Mussolini's choosing, may replace them. Fascism, which has had twelve years of "high ideal tension" at its disposal, has so far done only three things to make their situation any different from that of their prototypes elsewhere. It has entrenched them in their positions of privilege, by protecting them from the pressure of the Socialist and Liberal movements. It has provided them with a large sackful of gifts and heroic catchwords, like authority, discipline, patriotism, private enterprise and sport, and made them feel glorious, where Socialism and Liberalism made them feel ashamed. Thirdly, it has in recent months begun to make them feel afraid that what was forbidden to the Socialist party may yet be undertaken by a dictatorial but mild Socialist—Mussolini.

What issue, if any, can there be from this state of affairs? Mussolini will have to lead the Revolution which the Socialists were leading. As Duce he will be obliged, if he is really intent on casting out the middle-class spirit, to lead the workers to

the assault from which he had them bludgeoned thirteen years ago.

All the appeals to silent work, all the exhortations to stoic labour and a " lapidary style," are in practice, to an astonishing degree, contradicted. I have made careful enquiries to discover whether the Italian before Fascism was so loud, bombastic, forced, sensational, and florid. I find that he was not. Since there can be no competition in the rivalry of ideas and criticism, there is a rivalry in loud and superlative commentaries on the virtues of the régime. The superlative adjective and adverb have utterly expelled moderation and modesty. All of Mussolini's fulminations against the demagogues have recoiled upon his own head. As Mussolini says, the Dictatorship must go towards the people. Can it go towards the people unless it is prepared to stir them ? Indeed, it flourishes largely by persuading people that without it even the most ordinary matters in the life of society could not be : it boasts that it is the primal and only cause, for example, of Civil Service examinations, of old-age pensions, of a work-free day in the week. A Dictatorship in the modern world makes an effective corner in demagoguery ; and, like every monopolist, it sells inferior products at a high price. Of what use, then, is it for Signor Giovanni Giurati, a former Secretary of the Fascist Party, to give this counsel to the young Fascists : " In the illusion of better expressing things or exalting them, they often fall into the clumsy, the absurd, and the ridiculous. And they offend Fascism. The striving after effect is not Fascist ; the luxury of words is not Fascist. Figures, facts and serried logic ; there is the Fascist style." The Secretary of the Party was battling with an enemy which he knew to be degrading and disastrous, but he was uncomfortably aware that the children whom he was addressing heard nothing else.

Similarly of intrepidity. Mussolini has made current the two mottoes : " Live dangerously ! " and " Better a day's life as a lion, than the life of a sheep for a hundred years ! " What shall Italians dare ? To express their thoughts ? They are asked for obedience and faith, and given medals and certificates for it ; they are not asked for creativeness. In sport ? Certainly, there is some improvement in Italy in the numbers participating, and, perhaps, in the spirit of sportsmanship. But this is hardly

due to Fascist command, since a similar phenomenon has been world-wide since the War. There is a vocation to dangerous living, as there is to poetry or holiness. If dangerous living can be stimulated at all, this is done better in free societies, where allegiance is contingent, where people may change their minds and speak them, where no one is sheltered by the secrecy of the "reason of State." Whether they will or not, they are obliged to live dangerously. The first condition of human energy is challenge, not protection or repression.

The régime has taken away every reason for a popular interest in public affairs. The masses have become cynics, but not about Mussolini, because they still regard him as a force and as a remarkable person, sometimes entertaining, sometimes inspiring, and sometimes extravagant. They are cynics about the political process in general. For in spite of all the disturbance and the uproar, the amount of real change is small. What is it all about? They do not know. They give it up as a bad job. The population is resigned and supine, it is losing the appetite and the capacity for self-government; after a certain point propaganda defeats its own purpose. When, therefore, the foreign observer counts up all the mutual indictments, and duly makes allowance for the malicious exaggerations of the "good comrades" among Fascists, there does not seem to remain much improvement on Giolitti's system.

It is not surprising, therefore, that Fascist Italy has produced nothing new and valuable in any branch of art. It lives on its capital, and on the produce of other countries. The Fascist journals themselves ask, "Why has no Fascist art appeared?" But what, indeed, should its character be? The verbose journalese of the Fascist politician? Daring themes in the theatre? Only Pirandello produces and reproduces himself, and his genius is not Fascist. In general the stage-craft is worse than mediocre. Reinhardt and other foreign producers have led the way, even in the Italian theatre. Swiftness, energy and austere line in sculpture and architecture are foreign rather than Italian. The notable quality of Opera is not a Fascist virtue. The culture of Fascism has so far been the culture of a provincial middle-class. The newspapers are, with the exception of the *Corriere della Sera*, badly written, badly printed, badly

set-out, and petty provincial in character. The Cinema is very poor in every branch, from production to exhibition.

Perhaps there is more secular "charity" than before, but against this is the fact that the Party practically enforces it. There is, perhaps, more consciousness of being Italian, though not less of an attachment to the city and the region. There is more energy in government, but it is not spontaneous; the drive comes from an extraordinary man, and the public is not being trained to govern itself. Adam Smith said that there is a great deal of ruin in a country. Human nature is ingenious: when it is pursued it flees; when it is to be punished it hides; when its impulses are disparaged it gives them a mask and a pseudonym. That is what is occurring in Italy.

If Mussolini wishes to persist in his argument that Fascism was and is indispensable to the Italian people, that is, indeed, cruel defamation. Mill has observed: "Despotism is a legitimate mode of government in dealing with barbarians, provided the end be their improvement and the means justified by actually effecting that end." The Italians, surely, were not barbarians; and the facts seem to suggest that neither the ends for their improvement, nor the means adopted by twelve years of Fascism, justify the despotism. Even the propaganda for war is making, not warriors, but only resignation to war.

Mussolini is so different from the average Italian that it is difficult to conceive of his system surviving his own presence. At first he thought that a governing class would be created in 5 years; then the term was extended to 30 years; most recently he counselled patience because "the Fascist Revolution has the whole of the twentieth century before it!"[1] It wants a Mussolini, and a vigorous Mussolini, to accomplish even the relatively small amount that it has accomplished. He affects to believe that a *system* will take his place. Alternatively, he thinks that a corps of young men, one of whom will be outstanding, will replace him. How can this be possible when the young men violently disagree with each other, except in his presence? There will be, therefore, a short time during which his memory will restrain attempts at independence, and then the fight for the succession will certainly break out. When

[1] November 10th, 1934.

Mussolini fought for the succession to the liberal State the transition was bloody but not too difficult, for one was to take the place of many. The succession to the place of one, by a group of contenders, each the authentic repository of the gospel truth, is likely to produce a very disturbed period. Meanwhile the people are being trained to follow any *de facto* Government, so that if an incompetent should take Mussolini's place he will have a good start. One of the tests of a good system of government is whether it makes sound arrangements for its peaceful continuance. On this score the Fascist system is far inferior to the democratic. It condemns the masses to twenty or thirty years of absenteeism from politics. But the democratic system looks to a succession of average men, and of them there is an unbroken continuity. The Fascist system depends on a genius, and with his passage it must pass.

THE END

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